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Freedom in Dialogue : Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and Anti-Intellectualism in the Public Sphere

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by

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ABSTRACT

Senator Huey P. Long and radio priest Father Charles E. Coughlin were powerful forces in the public sphere of the United States in 1930. Often accused of being demagogues and Fascists, both men brought to the American people a message designed to relieve the suffering that had taken the country during the Depression. This message was rooted in the tradition of American Populism in which they had both grown up. The rhetoric of both men espoused faith in simple solutions and blamed Wall Street financiers, wealthy industrialists, and corrupt politicians for the hard times that had come. Just as interesting as the substantive content of their message and more essential to an understanding of Long and Coughlin as demagogues is the rhetorical style both men utilized throughout their discourse. Inherently anti-intellectual, Long and Coughlin's rhetorical style sought the submission of the audience to the rhetor by undermining the individual auditor's capacity for free thought and individual expression. Seeking to isolate and explain this rhetorical style in terms of it political function within the public sphere, this thesis examines Long and Coughlin's discourse through close-textual analysis. The two texts considered are Long's speech announcing the founding of the Share Our Wealth Society, "Every Man a King," and Coughlin's speech announcing the founding of the National Union for Social Justice. Both speeches exemplify the anti-intellectual style in that they function to over-identify with the audience, capture the audience in a cult of unthinking affirmation, and to systematically incapacitate the audience's intellect so as to disable their ability to question. Delivered over radio, Long and Coughlin's discourse is the antithesis to free dialogue in an interactive public sphere. Engaging people on a seemingly individual level, Long and Coughlin created a mass public that they ultimately rendered unable to think. In doing so, both men posed a threat to democracy.

PREFACE

Democracy is a way of personal life controlled not merely by faith in human nature in general but by faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgment and action if proper conditions are furnished. . . . For what is the faith of democracy in the role of consultation, of conference, of persuasion, of discussion, in formation of public opinion, which in the long-run is self-corrective, except faith in the capacity of the intelligence of the common man to respond with commonsense to the free play of facts and ideas which are secured by effective guarantees of free inquiry, free assembly and free communication? [1]
--John Dewey, "Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us"

You can laugh at Father Coughlin and you can snort at Huey Long—but this country was never under a greater menace. [2]
--Hugh Johnson, NBC Broadcast on March 4, 1935

Few Americans have polarized American attitudes to the degree that Senator Huey Pierce Long and radio host Father Charles Edward Coughlin did. Millions of Americans paid them homage worthy of a saint. Millions more expressed their disgust and scorn of both men, often fearing their rise in American politics as presaging an American-type of Fascism. The demagogy both men fashioned and afflicted on the already fragile state of American democracy in the Depression years of the early 1930s is thus not only a valuable case study of demagogy and democracy—it is an essential case study. The rise of Long and Coughlin marks one of the largest political movements in American history. An understanding of both men's success in appealing to the American public is essential for Americans to comprehend if they are to understand the threat that rhetoric similar to that of both men still poses to the mainstay of American democracy.

The menace Roosevelt loyalist Hugh S. Johnson identified in the rhetoric of Long and Coughlin warrants scholarly attention insofar as it threatened the sort of democratic scheme described by Dewey—a scheme that places faith in dialogue and an open discourse that is united with the development and exercise of a heightened intellectual capacity. Long and Coughlin were at odds with this scheme, as are the potential inheritors of their rhetorical skill of which proponents of democracy must still be wary. Both men represented a new, but modified

populist-type movement that was rooted in the rather conservative populism of the 1890s, in the fiery messages of politicians like William Jennings Bryan and in American traditions that can be traced back as far as the Jacksonian Era. These new Depression-era populists criticized the New Deal and the Roosevelt Administration for failing to act quickly. According to Long and Coughlin, the Administration had fallen miserably short of meeting promises to turn the Depression around and was not serious about fixing what both critics saw as a rather simple set of economic problems. They explained these problems to be the results of the Administration's cautious intellectualism and elitist tendencies, and responded with vitriolic accusations of Roosevelt being in alliance with big business.[3] It is fair to treat the men as leaders of a single broad movement in that both "drew from similar political traditions and espoused similar ideologies."[4] Though Long and Coughlin's early careers differed tremendously from one another and were started in separate regions, "as time went on, their constituencies increasingly overlapped and merged."[5] Though both initially endorsed Roosevelt, they later claimed that the president was not truly committed to the egalitarian faith in the "common man" and had become out of touch with the interests of the yeoman farmers and laborers on whose backs national prosperity rested. This criticism and the men's repeated calls for dreamy panaceas would lead them to become reactionaries, the embodiment of the authoritarian and dogmatic set of attitudes I will propose to group together under the label "anti-intellectual"—a term borrowed from the work of historian and social critic Richard Hofstadter.[6]

For Hofstadter, anti-intellectualism is a recurring trend in American life that demands public acknowledgement, attention, and understanding. It is characterized by a resentment of experts and thinkers, a scorn for intellectual approaches to problem-solving, a desire for easy solutions, and a disgust and mistrust of complexity. Anti-intellectualism, as I will expand upon

it, is often accompanied by popular appeals, provincialism and xenophobia, conspiracy theory, authoritarian leadership, false dichotomies, and a stifling of free thought and expression. It is my contention that this anti-intellectual attitude bears a commensurate anti-intellectual style that warrants rhetorical study, and that this style defined much of the public address of what I will identify as the Depression Populism that ran rampant in the early 1930s. In its adoption and utilization of an anti-intellectual style, Depression Populist discourses functioned as systematic means of social control aimed at channeling mass discontent into a single unthinking body politic prejudiced against the intellectual and his or her values—the values of free thought, liberation, and dialogue highlighted by Dewey in the epigram that opens this thesis. As such, these discourses comprise a distinct rhetorical genre of anti-intellectual speech that can be both isolated and explained in terms of its political function.

The Rhetoric of Depression Populism & Its Anti-Intellectual Style

The rhetoric of Depression Populism moved societies and communities increasingly closer to a dangerously oversimplified, nationalist, and ultimately anti-intellectual attitude that had far-reaching consequences. The increased hostility toward the public intellectual and expert by rising authoritarian and nationalist attitudes and approaches to the public scene paralleled attitudes in Europe that preceded, and which ultimately gave birth to the regimes of Hitler, Mussolini, and Franco. Needless to say, the movement demands rhetorical study so that an understanding of its unique occurrence in time can be attained and moral judgment rendered so as to avoid the perils that inevitably come with anti-intellectualism's rise, so heeding the familiar warning of history repeating itself. From the assumption that certain rhetorical forms will emerge to form constellations of persuasive force at certain points in history,[7] the importance of this study rests in the development of an understanding of these constellations and their impact

on democratic dialogue—in particular those constellations that may be characterized as anti-intellectual. The purpose of this thesis is twofold: first, to consider anti-intellectualism within the public sphere insofar as its rhetoric effects modes of democratic participation, thus extending Hofstadter's work into the realm of rhetorical studies, and second, to carry my isolation of an anti-intellectual style into patterns of speech that may well exist outside of Depression Populist discourses, thus demonstrating the interaction of form, style, and genre vis-à-vis the isolation and explanation of a recurrent feature in democratic discourse.

The importance of the first purpose rests on the assumption that rhetoric is a powerful and dynamic force in society that influences the people who experience it. Rhetoric that prompts people to think not for themselves but rather in systems of thought created by skilled but manipulative rhetors has a direct impact on democratic society. If premised on the participation of freethinking individuals who are enabled to form opinions and act on those opinions absent the existence of hegemonic or coercive rhetorical forces, then the anti-intellectual style is obviously anathema to democracy. In studying how democratic dialogue, and consequently, democracies as a whole are put in danger when such a rhetorical force is exercised within the public sphere, this study becomes profoundly critical. It will demonstrate the ways in which the anti-intellectual style functions to secure for its auditor-citizen a false sense of agency—coaxing citizen-auditors into agreement with demagoguery via a rhetorical coercion that is driven by resentment for the intellectual, the thinking man.

This thesis will expand the work of Richard Hofstadter by pushing his work further forward into the realm of rhetorical studies—specifically, public sphere studies. Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* contributes to our historical understanding of the resentment of the intellectual and expert while providing a positive picture of where the

intellectual and expert might stand in a more democratic America that is more solidly in line with the interconnected values of free dialogue and education. Rhetorical studies have long assessed public discourse in terms of its affect on a "public sphere"—"a realm of our social life in which something approaching public opinion can be formed."[8] This study aims to show how the public sphere can be manipulated by demagogues like Long and Coughlin, how individual thought is indeed stifled by this manipulation, and how this stifling affects a democracy of communicating equals and thus negates the actual existence of a free and open public sphere—of a freedom in dialogue. In agreement with Dewey that democracy is creative and necessarily involves the engagement of individuals who actively enact democratic principles, I conclude that any proper assessment of democracy "conceives of citizenship as a *mode of public engagement*."[9] Hence, democratic societies must be evaluated in terms of the discourse that they produce, and which, ultimately, binds them together as "communicating communities."[10] In drawing attention to citizenship as a process, a discourse theory recognizes the fluid, multimodal, and quotidian enactments of citizenship in a multiple public sphere."[11] Hence, Hofstadter's work will be extended into the realm of public sphere studies, alerting auditor-citizens to the dangerous nature of the anti-intellectual style.

The second purpose of this study stems from my agreement with rhetorician Edwin Black's approach to the study of rhetorical effect. The anti-intellectual style extant in Depression Populism will be treated in a broad sense that looks not to its securing of specific effects in specific situations, but rather to its extension across time so that Depression Populist rhetoric may be assessed in terms of "all the differences . . . it has made in the world and will make, and how the differences are made and why." [12] Hence, this thesis also aims to provide insight into anti-democratic dialogue as it has occurred, and will likely recur, in the United

States. The anti-intellectual style not only perpetuates itself and festers into sores that scar American democracy, but also propagates to become a driving force for the sort of intolerance, foolhardy ignorance, and stultifying authoritarian arrogance that is democracy's very antithesis. I will argue that several of the characteristics found in the anti-intellectual style are not unique to the 1930s and can be discovered in many of the texts we as citizens encounter in our present time. The rhetoric of Depression Populism thus becomes a cautionary tale of sorts.

To accomplish both these purposes, this thesis will employ a close-textual approach to the discourse of both men. This approach considers the rhetorical forms used by both Long and Coughlin and from an intense analysis of these forms derives the internal dynamic that holds each particular discourse together—their use of an identifiable anti-intellectual style. Two speeches will be considered for this analysis: Long's February 23, 1934, NBC radio address, "Every Man a King," and Coughlin's November 11, 1934, address "The National Union for Social Justice." Each speech vigorously attacks the Roosevelt Administration and introduces the platform of the organizations Long and Coughlin founded: the Share Our Wealth Society and the National Union for Social Justice, respectively. Both speeches are "rhetorical standards" of each man's discourse, representative and illustrative of the anti-intellectual style that coursed through Depression Populist discourse.[13] From an isolation and discussion of the rhetorical function of each speech, the discourse of both men can be assessed in terms of its political impact on democratic modes of participation in the public sphere.

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first of these discusses the nature of the study on a theoretical level, addressing its place in studies of demagogy and democratic theory. Providing an historical explanation of the exigence for anti-intellectual rhetoric in the Depression, the second chapter addresses the history of Depression Populism—its formation as a

distinct, yet ostensible, ideology, as well as its role in the politics of both Long and Coughlin, their audience, and the public sphere in which they spoke. The third and fourth chapters consist of contexts and analyses of Long's "Every Man a King" and Coughlin's "The National Union for Social for Social Justice" addresses. This analysis is concluded in a fifth chapter discussing the political impact of Long and Coughlin's discourse, and which will assess the anti-intellectual style's force in a democratic polity. The power of the anti-intellectual style as definitive of a recurrent genre of anti-intellectual discourse threatens the very heart and soul of democracy—the notion that real democracy is not simply the casting of one's vote at a polling place, but the constant engagement of the individual in the community.[14] It is in "everyday enactments of citizenship"[15] that democracy is experienced, that society is kept intact while moving progressively forward to the betterment of both individual and community.

NOTES

[1] John Dewey, "Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us," (1939) from *John Dewey: The Political Writings*, ed. Debra Morris and Ian Shapiro (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett, 1993), p. 242.

[2] Hugh S. Johnson, quoted in David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945* (New York, NY: Oxford, 1999), p. 240.

[3] Such resentment at the Roosevelt Administration is reflected in a letter he wrote as early as September 1934 in which Coughlin refers to the "Brain Trust" as the "Drain Trust": "Do you want me to preach 'Amen' both to the sins of omission and commission which have been perpetrated in the name of the New Deal, or . . . do you want me to oppose both reactionary politicians as well as the new type of rubber-stamp sycophants who prefer to follow the dictates of the 'Drain Trust' rather than the mandate of voters?" Coughlin is quoted in Charles J. Tull, *Father Coughlin and the New Deal* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1965, p. 59. Long frequently made similar statements.

[4] Alan Brinkey, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p. ix.

[5] Ibid.

[6] The phrase "anti-intellectual" is taken from historian and social critic Richard Hofstadter who used the term to identify and define a recurring attitude in American politics. Linking this attitude to a resentment of the "thinking man" of "intellect," Hofstadter traces this attitude throughout the history of the United States. See Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage, 1962).

[7] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, "Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism: An Introduction," *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, Second Edition, ed. Carl R. Burcghardt (State College, PA: Strata Publishing, 2000), p. 415. The term "constellation" used to describe a relationship between rhetorical forms is borrowed from the generical work of Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson.

[8] Jurgen Habermas, "The Public Sphere: An Encyclopedia Article (1964)," *New German Critique*, trans. Sara and Frank Lennox, 1, no. 3 (Fall 1974) (New York: Telos Press, 1974), p. 49. Habermas' definition of the "public sphere" is used not so much because my work hopes to build on Habermas' conception of the public sphere as a structural result of bourgeois capitalism, but rather to appeal what has largely been accepted as a standard definition of the terms whether one agrees with all of Habermas' suppositions as to structural transformation or not. For a review of work in public sphere theory, see G. Thomas Goodnight and David B. Hingstram, "Studies in the Public Sphere," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 83, no. 3 (August 1997), pp. 351-369.

[9] Robert Asen, "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 2 (May 2004), p. 191.

[10] Dewey and those scholars who have built on his work often use the term "communicating communities" to describe the importance of communication in forming and cohering communities. To Dewey, communities are the basic public units of democracy. Without such publics, democracy is not possible.

[11] Robert Asen, 191. Asen offers a discourse theory of citizenship after discussing various works describing the decline of citizenship in the United States as described by Robert Putnam and others. Explaining the difficulties of measuring citizenship and voluntarism, Asen proposes to view the issue through a different lens, reframing not in terms of a social science measurement of "acts," but rather to a more nuanced consideration of "action. Inquiring into the *how* of citizenship recognizes citizenship as a process. From this perspective, citizenship does not appear in specific acts per se, but symbols a process that may signify a number of different activities" (p. 191).

[12] Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), p. 74.

[13] See Michael Leff, "Textual Criticism: The Legacy of G.P. Mohrmann," *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, Second Edition., ed. Carl R. Burgchardt (State College, PA: Strata, 2000), p. 558.

[14] This notion of democracy has gained a great lot of recent scholarly attention following the publication of Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2000).

[15] Asen, p. 197.

CHAPTER 1
DEMOCRACY, DEMAGOGY, & ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM

The broad masses of a people consist neither of professors nor of diplomats. The scantiness of their abstract knowledge directs their sentiments more to the world of feeling. That is where their positive or negative attitude lies. It is receptive only to an expression of force in one of these two directions and never to a half-measure hovering between the two. Their emotional attitude at the same time conditions their extraordinary stability. Faith is harder to shake than knowledge. . . . Anyone who wants to win the broad masses must know the key that opens the door to their heart. Its name is not objectivity, but will and power. [1]
--Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*

Much has been made of Long and Coughlin's rise at a time when Fascism was storming Europe. Comparisons between both men and Hitler were frequent in the press, there being concern that the demagogy of either might give "rise to an American leader who would exploit the extraordinary license given by democracy to an entrepreneurial politics built on plebiscitary excitements."[2] The most vocal of these critics was Raymond Gram Swing, whose 1935 study of the movement was one of the first and fiercely fixated itself on the notion that Long, Coughlin, and others were the American equivalents of Fascism.[3] Sinclair Lewis' best-selling 1935 novel, *It Can't Happen Here*, also reflects such angst. In it, Lewis tells the story of Buzz Windrip, a Democratic populist who comes to power in much the same way Hitler or Mussolini did. The fear of Fascism gripped the American imagination throughout the 1930s, and though there were important differences between its rise in Europe and the rise of Long or Coughlin, there are important similarities as well.

Kenneth Burke said of Hitler that an understanding of the "medicine" he concocted is imperative "if we are to forestall the concocting of a similar medicine in America."[4] This thesis follows in a similar vain. Despite critical disparities between the rise of Hitler and the rise of Long and Coughlin, all three men were leaders of mass movements that actively charmed their followers into a blind and unthinking conception of reality. The harms occurring in the former case are well-known and documented, but the dangers in the latter are less so and yet more

particular to an American understanding of the problem. Not only are the old populist idioms Long and Coughlin used to address their audience uniquely American, but so is the way they came to power. They took their message to the people as part of some self-imagined, and certainly ostensible, Jeffersonian renaissance.[5] While Long and Coughlin did speak to the "common man," they did so not in a way that empowered the yeoman farmer, the railroad worker, and the industrial assemblyman. Rather, their rhetoric worked to subjugate their audience, casting their followers into a spell of personality, emotion, and unreason. One of the reasons why Long and Coughlin—and, as I would conjecture many European fascists—were so successful is because they *seemed* to empower the people. But, alas, all is not always as it seems.

The rhetoric of the Depression Populism adopted by Long and Coughlin deserves rhetorical study insofar as it was not merely symptomatic of, but worked to affect and, in fact, direct, the history of Depression Populism as a broad political movement. Long and Coughlin were at the forefront of this movement, founding and defining it. Other activists, including Long's sycophantic follower, Gerald K. Smith, were also involved to a lesser degree. It was Long and Coughlin who, after both men's denunciation of Roosevelt, controlled its ranks. Their ideology was more than mere Depression dissidence.[6] Longites and Coughlinites sought "to defend the autonomy of the individual and the independence of the community against encroachments from the modern state."[7] Ironically, however, Depression Populism worked against this value scheme. Instead, it subjugated the individual and the community—not to the modern state, but to the demagogue. Long and Coughlin saw themselves as the people's leaders, and often compared themselves to such figures as George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, John the Baptist, and most often, Christ. If the people gave them the power, Long and Coughlin would enact change for their benefit. Democracy thus was relegated to the elevation of a single

chosen individual to watch over all in some Hobbesian conception of the public good. This teleological basis for action is echoed perfectly in one of Coughlin's many declarations: "If necessary, I shall dictate to preserve democracy."[8] No longer was democracy an end in itself—rather, it was a value that could be trumped by the thought of a single individual designating himself superior to the masses, deciding single-handedly his political authority to be in their interests.

Perhaps this teleological justification for authority is what renders Long and Coughlin such difficult figures to judge, and why opinions, even among academics, tilt so strongly one way or the other in passing judgment on the character of each man.[9] This study will avoid judgment of Long and Coughlin as people and instead exercise such judicial authority in evaluation of their discourse. In looking to Long and Coughlin's discourse, this study will "find projected . . . the image of a man." According to Edwin Black's idea of a discourse's "second persona," a discourse should be judged by "what the rhetor would have his real auditor become." The second persona will "exert on [the auditor] the pull of an ideology. It will move, unless he rejects it, to structure his experience."[10] Accepting Black's notion of a discourse's second persona, this thesis will address what the discourses of Long and Coughlin did to those who listened to them. How did these discourses structure their experiences? How did Long and Coughlin achieve their effect? What were the political ramifications of having achieved it? These are the questions this study seeks to answer. Though not Fascist in its ideological orientation, Depression Populism was purely authoritarian in its political structuration—in both the way it came to power and expressed itself á la its rhetorical force

Assessing the Force of Words: Past Rhetorical Study of Long and Coughlin

Coughlin's founding of the Union Party in 1936 and its chosen presidential candidate, William Lemke, was Depression Populism's end-result—the fizzled conclusion of a movement that before Long's death in September of 1935 had struck fear in the heart of the popular Roosevelt Administration. A poll conducted by the Democratic National Convention in spring of 1935 found that Long could win eleven percent of the American electorate, taking six million votes nationwide.[11] Coughlin was also included in the poll even though he had not expressed any presidential ambitions. Further, his stature as a Catholic priest would make him an unlikely candidate to begin in with an election just eight years after Al Smith's crushing defeat. Even so, Coughlin fared surprisingly well in the poll. He received as much as two percent of the popular vote in the New England, Great Lakes, and mid-Atlantic regions where his radio broadcast reached. Both men had the power to influence the re-election of President Roosevelt, who polled at fifty-four percent to an unnamed Republican candidate's thirty percent. Roosevelt staffer Frank Murphy wrote that "it was easy to conceive a situation whereby Long… might have the balance of power in the 1936 election,"[12] and the Administration had for a while been worried of Coughlin's ability to detract voters from among Roosevelt's key constituencies.

Both men were in the public eye long before the 1936 campaign. As of 1934, Coughlin's Sunday radio sermons were reaching ten million people and he was receiving more mail than any other person in the United States, including Roosevelt.[13] Long also reached huge audiences of millions of people when he spoke on NBC, and his Share Our Wealth Society reported as many as 7,682,768 members in April of 1935.[14] Always attracting national press and audiences that competed with the President, Long and Coughlin were a major force in public politics. Yet, despite their threat and the fact that both men amassed their power through their use of language,

little rhetorical study has been done of either. What rhetorical study has been done has failed to provide an adequate explanation of their political success.

Ernest Bormann's 1953 dissertation on Long is a comprehensive undertaking that succeeds in isolating several of the rhetorical forms Long used in the eleven national radio broadcasts he delivered from March 27, 1933, to July 19, 1935. However, Bormann's analysis fails to go beyond naming these disparate forms and never seeks to discuss their cumulative effect on Long's audience. In addition, though Bormann aims to study "the speaking practices of men who have handled the tools of mass communication in an irresponsible way,"[15] he falls short in this mission due to his own strict adherence to a neo-Aristotelian mode of criticism. Bormann's isolation of a series of disparate rhetorical forms never leads to a discussion of the political effect those forms work together to achieve, and as a result he concludes that "Long's speeches differ little from speeches by Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, or Dwight Eisenhower."[16] Bormann further concludes that "the uniqueness of demagogy lies outside the sphere of what might be called the craftsmanship of speech-making," resting instead "in the character of the speaker."[17] Such miscalculations are due to Bormann's inattention to Long's style and his treatment of it as subordinate to and separate from Long's character.

Other studies of Long follow in a similar vain, relegating Long's style to a list of rhetorical forms and discussion of his biographical background, his speech training, the content of his speeches, and the specific effect of the speech he gave in templates even simpler than the one Bormann applies. In 1955, Elton Abernathy chronicled Long's career, crediting his political advancement to his oratory.[18] Abernathy cites Long's reliance on ethical and emotional proof, writing that he used "logical proofs sparingly, or not at all. He was partial to argument from authority, frequently quoting at length from the Bible, William Green, Pope Pius, Josephus, or

Socrates."[19] Abernathy never moves beyond such broad and generic observations. Harold Mixon makes more lively observations in a 1981 article on Long, but his analysis is even less focused, including a series of discussions pertaining to the various themes of Long's speeches he identifies as "flag issues."[20] Paul Gaske, also seeking to explain Long's demagogy as Bormann and Mixon were, pays particular attention to Long's February 23, 1934, radio address, "Every Man a King."[21] Gaske uses Kenneth Burke's motivational pattern of guilt, victimage, redemption, and salvation, but does so in such a way that his findings are confined to Burke's model to a degree that preempts any substantively comprehensive understanding of Long.

The two most valuable rhetorical studies of Long are recent, and both take an explicitly functional approach to Long's discourse. The first of these is Robert Iltis' 1989 dissertation, "Beyond Devil Tokens: The Style of Huey P. Long." Iltis aims to give an account of "the textual dynamics of Long's speaking and writing; that is, interpretation of the interrelationships among the parts of a given discourse as those parts function toward the end of the whole."[22] Seeking to explain the "rhetorical function" of Long's strategies, Iltis examines a Long broadside against the 1916 Employer's Liability Act from Long's days as a small town lawyer in his home town of Winn Parish, Louisiana, as well as Long's famous "Every Man a King" address. [23] However, despite Iltis' intention to explain parts of Long's discourse as the "function toward the end of the whole,"[24] he never seems to clearly isolate what this end is. The closest Iltis comes to an answer is that Long moved beyond mere scapegoating in his rhetorical appeals "by placing blame on the economic system rather than on wealthy individuals."[25] Although Iltis falls short of his goal of explicating how the whole of the rhetorical forms Long utilizes function to achieve this end, his study is insightful in terms of its close-textual approach that allows him to carefully consider the political effects of Long's use of various forms. Despite its fragmentary treatment of these

effects and failure to provide a comprehensive explanation of what Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson characterize as the "internal dynamic" that fuses a speech or group of speeches together,[26] Iltis' dissertation is a valuable contribution to Long scholarship.

Michael Signer's 2001 dissertation, "The Demagogue: Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern" also provides an excellent analysis of Long's discourse. Signer contends that Long's discourse is representative of what he terms the "modern demagogue." His mission is to explain demagogy in ancient, modern, and postmodern times with the paradigm examples of Cleon, Long, and Ronald Reagan, evaluating how each demagogue is different and how each must be treated given his particular sociopolitical context. Although Signer is a political scientist and not a rhetorical critic, he nonetheless pays careful attention to rhetorical forms that Long uses and how they function to control Long's audience. Signer considers the modern demagogue to function with a "theatricality that is mechanized and routinized, yet public and explicit, and who incites ungovernability that is more private than institutional, and no longer unpredictable."[27] Signer's analysis goes beyond that of Iltis, linking the combined rhetorical strategies both Iltis and Signer discuss to a demagogic function of social control. While his analysis is not as focused as Iltis', Signer employs the skills of a rhetorical critic well to provide a better understanding of how the demagogue wields his rhetorical power to gain control.

There has not been as much rhetorical study of Coughlin's discourse as there has been of Long's. First, and most famously, is Alfred McClung and Elizabeth Briant Lee's 1939 study of Coughlin published by the Institute for Propaganda Analysis. The Lees' study intended to educate "uncritical Americans" to the woes of modern propaganda, shedding "light on the devices propagandists use in their efforts to swing us to their ways of thinking and acting."[28] Extracting examples of what they concluded were "tricks of the trade" found in Coughlin's

discourse, the Lees hoped to provide Americans with the capability to recognize propaganda, which they considered to be "a new means for rendering a country defenseless in the face of an invading army."[29] While the Lees' study is valuable in terms of isolating these general attributes, it falls short of providing deeper answers as to what made Coughlin's speeches so effective.

David Terrance Coe's 1970 dissertation, "The Analysis and Criticism of the Rhetoric of Father Charles E. Coughlin" was the first comprehensive examination of Coughlin's rhetoric and followed the neo-Aristotelian model for criticism. While Coe isolates numerous rhetorical forms used by the radio priest, it shares the same failings as Bormann's study of Long. John Gerard Doran's 1974 dissertation, "The Analysis and Criticism of the Rhetoric of Father Charles E. Coughlin," attempts to more greatly explore Coughlin's use of his priestly ethos and his use of topics via content analysis. Doran dismisses the notion of Coughlin as a Fascist-style demagogue, concluding instead that he was a skillful manipulator who was not attached to any particular brand of ideology. For Doran, "Coughlin's own image of himself was that of a Catholic priest obedient at all times to his superiors. Beyond that he was confused and eclectic in what he did and said. He is a complex man. You cannot write him off as a 'Populist' and be done with him."[30] However, Coughlin spoke out of more than just mere expediency, and while Doran's explanation of his use of a priestly ethos is contributory, the whole of Doran's study is short-sighted in its contribution to a holistic understanding of Coughlin as a political actor. This failure is due to Doran's inability to examine style and form as having ideological consequences.

A more contemporary study of Coughlin can be found in Susan Zickmund's 1993 dissertation, "The Shepherd of the Discontented: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Discourse of Father Charles E. Coughlin." Zickmund's study is the most complete of any of the Coughlin

studies, tracing the priest's rhetoric as it evolved throughout his radio career. Coughlin's career is examined from the start of his radio career in 1926 when he began to offer Mass on Detroit's local radio station and deliver religious sermons. Following a consideration of the radio priest's early career, Zickmund then assess his later and more controversial radio sermons from his denunciation of communism and capitalism as errant of Christian tenets to his obsession with monetary policy and vitriolic criticism of Roosevelt. The study is complete and precise, though its focus is scattered and principally aimed toward Coughlin's arguments, use of various disparate rhetorical forms, and ability to control his audience via his priestly standing. It is in the discussion of this standing where Zickmund makes her most interesting arguments, concluding that "Coughlin strove to embody the role of the revealer of truth and reality."[31] However, Zickmund pays little attention to the political effect of this strategy. The most recent study of Coughlin is Ronald H. Carpenter's 1998 book *Father Charles E. Coughlin: Surrogate Spokesman for the Disaffected*. Carpenter makes a number of different arguments in each of the book's chapters that are too numerous to recount here. However, throughout all of Carpenter's he never attempts to reveal the internal dynamic of which Campbell and Jamieson theorize. Arguments are made as to how Coughlin developed his priestly persona and his credibility as an economic expert, though much of the book is more historical than rhetorical—recounting various arguments Coughlin made in response to different exigencies.[32]

A review of past rhetorical studies of Long and Coughlin reveals two fundamental shortcomings, at least one of which is true of each study addressed. First, discourses must be studied in terms of the broad effect they have on their audience, the critic paying attention to both how and why the discourse secures this effect. Second, findings as to the broad effect of a specific discourse should be treated as a potentially recurring political force. This means that the

found effect should be assessed in terms of the impact it has on political society. Where past studies have fallen short in one or both of these critical imperatives, this thesis will reveal answers in accordance with both.

Rhetoric, Genre, & Style: Approaching the Discourse of Long and Coughlin

Robert Hariman writes that "to the extent politics is an art, matters of style must be crucial to its practice."[33] Since "the modern human sciences have not yet produced a strong account of what every successful politician knows intuitively—political experience, skill, and result often involve conventions of persuasive composition that depend on aesthetic reactions,"[34] rhetorical studies are essential to an understanding of how political power is subjectively gained on moral and aesthetic grounds. Neither of these grounds is conducive to the empirical study in which political scientists so often focus their efforts, hence enters the value of rhetorical study. Hariman's approach to politics is true to Richard Weaver's understanding of rhetoric as "operating at the point where literature and politics meet, or where literary values and political urgencies can be brought together. The rhetorician makes use of the moving power of literary presentation to induce in his hearers an attitude or decision which is political in the very broadest sense."[35] In approaching Long and Coughlin's discourse, it is first important to address rhetoric as a force in society, as well as to highlight an appropriate approach to its study that considers its recurrent potential and that accounts for and defines what precisely is meant by "style."

Rhetoric as a Force in Society

Rhetoric is a mode of action that negotiates the social reality existing between individuals.[36] According to Carroll C. Arnold, "a basic characteristic of rhetorical engagement or relationship under conditions of orality is that each party retains its dominion over self but commits himself to ally (often fitfully) with the other in closure-encouraging, closure-making

activity. Because the alliance is sustained orally, the burden of sustaining it to the listener's satisfaction falls upon the person-as-action of the speaker."[37] The notion of persons-as-actions drives Arnold's characterization: people are always developing, always caught in the constant flux of Heraclitan becoming. In this light, rhetoric can be viewed as a series of ongoing speech-acts.[38] J.G.A. Pocock defines "speech-acts" as "actions on language, expropriating the inherited, already constituted framework in order to modify or transform it. . . . It is this process of constant interaction between speech and language, action and structure, that constitutes 'a discourse.'"[39]

Rhetoric structures experience. The significance of this to a historical and political study of Long and Coughlin is vast, for it points to the necessity that a study of the discourse of both men, insofar as it is explicative of the effect both men had on their audience, must tie itself to the idea that rhetoric is a subjectively relational phenomenon. As such, rhetoric is not merely symptomatic of historical and political events, but essential to their cause, "exhibit[ing] a 'work-like dimension' as acts of meaning-production in which given forms and contents are set into new patterns of relationship in order to constitute a new meaningful reality."[40] The value of rhetorical study to an understanding of history and politics lies in the understanding of rhetoric as a transformative force.[41] Historians and political scientists who have studied Long and Coughlin in the past have neglected this fact, as have many of the rhetorical critics who have failed to unite and extend their findings in terms of effect.[42] Despite its comprehensiveness and insight into both men and the historical context of their rise to power, historian Alan Brinkley's study of Long and Coughlin commits this fallacy. Aiming to isolate a common ideology both men shared, Brinkley calls for scholars to consider the movement in terms of its "vision," or rather as driven by an ideology more serious than "a demagogic attempt to delude the public with empty,

impractical promises."[43] What Brinkley fails to note is that the "vision" of which Long and Coughlin spoke was rhetorical, existing as a creation of meaning between speaker and audience. What he further misses is that the demagogy of both men was the means to communicating and securing this vision in the psychology of their audience.

Rhetoric as Genre

If rhetoric is a mode of action forming "new meaningful realities," then the heuristic value of studying these realities lies in "emphasizing the symbolic and rhetorical contexts in which rhetorical acts are created," linking "a class of similar artifacts . . . [to] an undercurrent of history."[44] Accepting that "a rhetorical technique will almost always stand as a live possibility at any point in history,"[45] a study of Long and Coughlin must be able to extend its findings across time if it is to succeed as a critical endeavor. Hence, the discourse of Long and Coughlin should be viewed as belonging to a genre. My use of the term stems from the work of Edwin Black. A genre is best defined as a constellation of rhetorical forms that synchronically function together to accomplish a rhetorical purpose. This definition warrants further discussion and explanation. For Black,

> the terms 'genre' and 'form' have the same relationship to one another as do the Collection and Division of Platonic dialectic. That is, the genre of a thing is its class—a statement of its relations to all other commensurable things. The form of that thing is its inherent structure—a statement of its constituents and their relationship to one another. Genre refers to the place of the thing in the universe and to its generation as an adaptive and relational entity. Form refers to the constitution and individuality of the thing and to its formation as an entity sufficiently autonomous to be identifiable. Taken together, the words 'genre' and 'form' are

> complementary in that 'genre' refers to external relations and 'form' refers to internal relations.[46]

Being concerned with the former, my focus is the "genre" of the various rhetorical forms—syntactical devices, metaphors, grammatical inventions, etc.—as they function *together* to accomplish a rhetorical purpose.[47] Essentially, it is the external relations of forms that are up for discussion when I discuss Long and Coughlin's rhetoric as "genre."

Rhetoric as Style

Considering genre, Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson theorize that these "constellations of rhetorical forms" are held together by an "internal dynamic" fusing all elements of the genre together.[48] They also note that "a constellation of elements bound together dynamically need only exist in a single instance to establish a genre or generic potential,"[49] a notion that is critical to the methodology I have adopted in approaching Long and Coughlin's discourse. This internal dynamic binds the constellation that I will refer to as "style." As Black instructs, "the function of [these] properties defines the style."[50] A rhetorical critic must do more than merely ascertain the existence of the constellation; they must probe at its functional value. It is not the presence of various rhetorical forms that defines style, but rather the function that binds those forms together—it is style that establishes genre.[51] Hence, the anti-intellectual style works to constitute an anti-intellectual genre of speech. Throughout the study I will use "style" instead of "genre," except in my explanations linking the two terms.

Approaching rhetoric as style, the rhetorical critic is empowered "to focus on elements of political composition that are indeed important to participation and outcome, without producing a merely formal understanding or reinforcing unreflectively a particular standard or judgment."[52] Where so much rhetorical criticism inevitably falls short is in its inability to treat style as a

primary determinant of social reality and citizenship. Treating style as such enlightens not only general understandings of rhetoric, but also the historical situations and political phenomena rhetoric transforms. While historians and politicians have focused on style before, their treatment of it is generally imprecise and lacking in the sophistication rhetorical criticism can offer. An example of such imprecision can be observed in Richard Hofstadter's treatment of the "paranoid style." Hofstadter defines style as "the way in which ideas are believed and advocated" before revealing his intention to use "political rhetoric to get at political pathology."[53] In treating style as only symptomatic of ideology, Hofstadter's conclusions, while enlightening, lack the coherent force that a rhetorical treatment of style as a political function could otherwise achieve. Instead of analyzing style as revelatory of political reality, the better approach would be to analyze it as determinative of political reality. While modern scholars struggle with the nexus between rhetoric and politics, the Greeks understood it well. Sophists treated style as important and studied it with due diligence, instructing students of politics as to which style might be used to attain what political effect.[54] If taken, the Sophistic view of style as a strategic means chosen to attain a specific end makes it much easier to comprehend style in terms of its functional value. While the Sophists' focus was more instructional and speaker-centered, the modern scholar of rhetoric should also adopt an audience-centered and critical approach to style as a mechanism driving modes of social action. Questions asked by the rhetorical critic should be rooted in this orientation.[55]

Demagogy, Democracy, & Anti-Intellectualism in the Public Sphere

Examining the demagogic threat Long and Coughlin posed to American democracy requires a general understanding of the relation between demagogy and democracy, as well as a critical approach to realizing the danger. As Signer argues early in his study, demagogy is

inherent to democracy. Prompting irrational action by the *hoi polloi*, demagogy involves "no foreign agents, no exogenous causes or political viruses. . . . The demon is local and indigenous. It is as if a body politic, with its own hands, attacks itself."[56] As political philosophers since Plato have taken note, the demagogue "may transform a state and lead to a demand for despotism."[57] Democracy's fundamental faith in the access of citizens to government decision making and its investment in the mechanism of majority rule result in the possibility that a majority of citizens may elect to surrender their freedom and render themselves subject to some popularly-favored leader. The majority may trade autonomy for devotion to a charismatic leader. Fear of such folly of the masses motivated the framers to carefully devise a system of checks and balances to slow the unwieldy and dangerous nature of democracy from the irrational *hoi polloi*. Familiar with the warnings of Cicero, Hamilton writes in Federalist No. 1 that

> a dangerous ambition more often lurks behind the specious mask of zeal for the rights of the people than under the forbidden appearance of zeal for the firmness and efficiency for government. History will teach us that the former has been found a much more certain road to the introduction of despotism than the latter, and that of those men who have overturned the liberties of republics, the greatest number have begun their career by paying obsequious court to the people; commencing demagogues, and ending tyrants.[58]

While it is true that, as Signer notes, what emerges as ochlocracy easily becomes tyranny, this study aims to take a more specific view of the problem, reframing democracy in much the same way the framers did.

Realizing that pure democracy is undesirable due to the constant threat posed by a rising tyrannous majority, the framers instead sought a deliberative democracy guided by a firm commitment to constitutionalism. Such commitment was to bring about a democracy that was

both reflective and responsive, producing the necessary forethought and debate critical to the creation of sound public policy.[59] Political and legal theorists from Aristotle to Mill to Rawls have long recognized the necessity of good argument and debate in democratic societies. Such commitment has led some scholars, for example Bertolt Brecht, to go so far as to urge citizens' alienation from the rest of their peers so as not to compromise the autonomy resulting from private deliberation.[60] Accepting the premise that democracy must be deliberative to function properly, this study treats demagogy as counter to and contemptuous of this end. However, this study also seeks a more specific conception of the problem.

One of the problems with demagogy is the difficulty of isolating what exactly it is that defines a demagogue. While so many critiques of demagogy end up doing little more than hurling arguments *ad hominem*, this study seeks a process-oriented approach that assesses demagogy in terms of the rhetorical style that so often accompanies its rise to power. This is not to say that all of what may be characterized as demagogy shares a common style. However, what is often generally lambasted as demagogy often utilizes a rhetorical style that is instrumental to securing a specific political effect. Instead of automatically labeling speech demagogic, a better approach is to consider *why* it is so—to look at the function the speech, to examine *how* it produces its desired effect. Merely to demean speech as demagogic serves no valuable purpose, often confusing ends with means while attaching no precise meaning on what exactly the label entails. This study proposes to better define demagogy as a means to achieving whatever end the demagogue wants. Thus, demagogy should not be determined based on its effect—the riots it may incite, the intolerance it might imbue, the passions it potentially raises. Rather, demagogy must be defined as means to an end, the means being the submission of the demagogue's audience to whatever he or she desires after rendering them dull and unthinking,

their intellect disabled and will to question authority crushed. Demagogy is, inherently, anti-intellectual.

Historian Richard Hofstadter identifies anti-intellectualism as a plague in American politics (as well as perhaps the politics of other nations), a trend that runs the gambit of American civic life. According to Hofstadter, anti-intellectualism targets the "egghead" intellectual and the use of intellect in general. To understand what Hofstadter means by anti-intellectualism, it is critical to understand his conception of "intellect." For Hofstadter, "intellect" is different from "intelligence." Intelligence is

> an excellence of mind that is employed within a fairly narrow, immediate, and predictable range; it is a manipulative, adjustive, unfailingly practical quality—one of the most eminent and endearing of the animal virtues. Intelligence works within the framework of limited but clearly stated goals, and may be quick to shear away questions of thought that do not seem to help in reaching them. Finally, it is of such universal use that it can daily be seen at work and admired alike by simple or complex minds.[61]

In contrast, intellect

> is the critical, creative, and contemplative side of the mind. Whereas intelligence seeks to grasp, manipulate, re-order, adjust, intellect examines, ponders, wonders, theorizes, criticizes, imagines. Intelligence will seize the immediate meaning in a situation and evaluate it. Intellect evaluates evaluations, and looks for the meanings of situations as a whole. Intelligence can be praised as a quality in animals; intellect, being a unique manifestation of human dignity, is both praised and assailed as a quality in men."[62]

While intelligence is universally valued, Hofstadter postulates that intellect is less so. Indeed, intellect, and consequently the intellectual, are frequently objects of scorn.[63] Concluding that

intellectuals exist as experts and ideologues, Hofstadter concludes that "they intensify the prevalent sense of helplessness in our society."[64] While the intellectual as an expert is often despised "by quickening the public's resentment of being the object of constant manipulation," the intellectual as ideologue is despised "by arousing the fear of subversion and by heightening all the other grave psychic stresses that have come with modernity."[65] For Hofstadter, the resentment of intellect and the intellectual is in part a response to modernity, of increasing uncertainty in an increasingly uncertain world. Hofstadter's explanation of the origins of anti-intellectualism is revelatory of its often reactionary tones as manifest in Protestant evangelical fundamentalism, McCarthyism, and Nazism.

As "man is not only made by history—history is made by man,"[66] coexistent with the anti-intellectual attitude Hofstadter describes is an anti-intellectual style which perpetuates anti-intellectualism as a social force. Thus, to understand anti-intellectualism, one must take up those tasks Erich Fromm assigns to social psychology: "Its task is to show not only how passions, desires, anxieties change and develop as a result of social process, but also how man's energies thus shaped into more specific forms in their turn become *productive forces, molding the social process*."[67] Hofstadter has much to say in general about anti-intellectualism as a social pathology, discussing its origins and explaining its effects. However, he does not so much endeavor to explain the "more specific forms" anti-intellectualism takes to become a "productive force." These forms are best studied in approaching anti-intellectualism as rhetorical style.

The anti-intellectual style, as I will expand upon it, consists of a series of rhetorical forms held together in constellations to function as a means of social control, a way of targeting the intellect, incapacitating it, and forcing submission to whoever succeeds in so doing. Its broad effect is to divert the individual auditor from private, reflective thought, and to instead turn the

auditor's attention to the personality of the demagogue as an all-empowering force vis-à-vis an over-identification with the rhetor. Approaching demagogy in terms of an anti-intellectual style allows the critic to react not to the demagogue as a person, but rather to demagogy as a rhetorical/social process. Hence, the difficulty that is so often faced passing judgment on the demagogue is assuaged, the focus no longer centered on dislike of the demagogue's mere outward personality tics or set of policies or intentions. While personality is inextricably linked to style, focusing on personality in a shallow way without relation to style results in short-sighted criticism. As Signer notes, "it is not uncommon when criticizing a demagogue for the appetites of the critic to take her over. This process can prevent the critic from comprehending how the demagogue actually works. . . ."[68] The problem is avoided if demagogy is viewed as a means to power to be rejected flatly regardless of any teleological justification; no matter what the aim of the rhetor, demagogy exercising the anti-intellectual style poses a categorical harm to society, rendering it categorically objectionable. Reconceptualizing demagogy in terms of style remedies a critical problem and achieves what should be the critic's ultimate goal: determining how demagogy works.

This anti-intellectual style was utilized by Long and Coughlin, and will be assessed in terms of its political impact on the public sphere. The public space where public opinion is fashioned by way of public deliberation, the public sphere is studied so as to "examine the recursive relationships between social organization and discursive practices."[69] In turning attention to the effect Long and Coughlin's discourse had on their audience—in understanding their rhetoric as *productive force*—this study examines how the anti-intellectual style structured political experience and effected modes of democratic participation during the Depression Populist era. The impact of the anti-intellectual style on the citizen's ability to participate in

democratic politics will be contrasted to Dewey's notion of democracy as creative and quotidian—"a way of personal life controlled not merely by faith in human nature but by faith in the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgment and action if proper conditions are furnished."[70] If, as it is for Dewey, "the problem of the public" is "the improvement of the methods and conditions of debate, discussion, and persuasion,"[71] then the anti-intellectual style must be judged in its relation to this problem. Doing so fulfills what is an essential need for democratic publics, a necessary task if will and power are to be resisted and freedom maintained.

NOTES

[1] Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), p. 338.

[2] Michael Signer, "The Demagogue: Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern" (Unpublished Dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 2001), p. 101.

[3] See Raymond Gram Swing, *Forerunners of American Fascism* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries Press, 1935). Swing's journalistic study of what he considers American Fascism treats Long, Coughlin, Mississippi Senator Theodore Bilbo, Francis Townsend, and William Randolph Hearst. However, it pays attention more to the ideology of its subjects and their personalities than to their rhetoric or means of persuasion.

[4] Kenneth Burke, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle," *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, Second Edition, ed. Carl R. Burgchardt (State College, PA: Strata, 2000), p. 209.

[5] Long and Coughlin, like the leaders of the populist People's Party before them, saw themselves as resurrecting a truer, more sincere America that was more in line with the values of the founders. Their vision of a Jeffersonian purity that could be revivified in an America facing the worst economic depression it had in its history was the driving force of their ideology. Coughlin went so far as to compare himself with Jefferson and Washington: "I am characterized as a revolutionary for raising my voice against these palpable injustices while the blind Bourbons cannot see the writing on the wall nor read the pages of history written in crimson pens which were dipped into bleeding hearts at Concord, Lexington, and Valley Forge! In 1776 Washington and Jefferson and their compatriots had hurled at them the vile epithet of 'revolutionary'," quoted in Susan Zickmund, "The Shepherd of the Discontented: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Discourse of Father Charles E. Coughlin" (Unpublished Dissertation, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1993), p. 203.

[6] There were in the early 1930s other dissident groups far different from their constituency such as the Communist Workers' Party, the League for Independent Political Action, the Farmer-Laborites, among others.

[7] Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p. xi.

[8] Rev. Charles E. Coughlin, "Father Coughlin's Weekly Letter: Democracy Within the National Union," *Social Justice*, May 15, 1936, 36, quoted in Zickmund, p. 204.

[9] Take for instance the contrast between Robert Penn Warren's characterization of Long in *All the King's Men* and T. Harry Williams' depiction of him as a sympathetic leader who sought to do right by his constituents even if bringing about progress meant foregoing the rules some of the time. Cf. Edward F. Haas, "Huey Pierce Long and Historical Speculation," *History Teacher* 27, no. 2, pp. 125-131.

[10] Edwin Black, "The Second Persona," from *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, Second Edition, Carl R. Burgchardt (State College, PA: Strata, 2000), p. 194.

[11] Brinkley, pp. 207-209, pp. 284-286. The secret-opinion poll was conducted by experienced pollster Emil Hurja and was one of the first of its kind. Potential voters across the nation were to express their choices for president among Roosevelt, an unnamed Republican candidate, Long, and Coughlin.

[12] Frank Murphy, quoted in Brinkley, p. 208.

[13] Brinkley, p.119.

[14] William Ivy Hair, *The Kingfish and His Realm: The Life and Times of Huey P. Long* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), p. 272.

[15] Ernest Gordon Bormann, "A Rhetorical Analysis of the National Radio Broadcasts of Huey P. Long," (Unpublished Dissertation: State University of Iowa, 1953), p. 20.

[16] Bormann, "Huey Long: Analysis of a Demagogue," *Communication Quarterly* 2 (September, 1954), p. 16.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Elton Abernathy, "Huey Long: Oratorical 'Wealth-Sharing,'" *The Southern Speech Journal*. Winter 1955, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 87-102.

[19] Ibid., p. 100.

[20] Harold Mixon, "Huey P. Long: 1927-28 Gubernatorial Primary Campaign," *The Oratory of Southern Demagogues*, ed. Cal M. Logue and Howard Dorgan (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1981), pp. 175-202.

[21] Paul C. Gaske, "The Analysis of Demagogic Discourse: Huey Long's 'Every Man a King' Address," *American Rhetoric from Roosevelt to Reagan*, ed. Halford Ross Ryan (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1983), pp. 49-67.

[22] Robert Stephen Iltis, "Beyond Devil Tokens: The Style of Huey P. Long" (Unpublished dissertation, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1989), pp. 41-42.

[23] Ibid, p. 28.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., p. 160.

[26] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, "Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism," *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 2nd ed., ed. Carl R. Burgchardt (State College, PA: Strata, 2000), p. 415.

[27] Signer, p. 132.

[28] Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee, *The Fine Art of Propaganda: A Study of Father Coughlin's Speeches* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1939), p. viii.

[29] Ibid., p. 14.

[30] John Gerard Doran, "The Analysis and Criticism of the Rhetoric of Father Charles E. Coughlin" (Unpublished dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1974), p. 25.

[31] Zickmund, p. 100.

[32] Ronald H. Carpenter, *Father Charles E. Coughlin: Surrogate Spokesman for the Disaffected* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998). Carpenter's book contains only five chapters, one of which chronicles exclusively Coughlin's radio address concerning the World Court and the master of radio's enormous political skill.

[33] Robert Hariman, *Political Style: The Artistry of Power* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 3.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Richard M. Weaver, "Language is Sermonic," *Language is Sermonic: Richard M. Weaver on the Nature of Rhetoric*, ed. Richard L. Johannesen, Rennard Strickland, and Ralph T. Eubanks (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), p. 225.

[36] See Michael Leff, "Textual Criticism: The Legacy of G.P. Mohrmann," *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, Second Edition, ed. Carl R. Burcghardt (State College, PA: Strata, 2000), p. 551. For Leff, "the rhetorical process negotiates between the symbolic action manifested by the text and he more ambiguous symbolic world based in the plurality of ordinary public experience." My definition is also grounded in the work of John Dewey, who asserts that "through speech a person dramatically identifies himself with potential acts and deeds; he plays many roles, not in successive stages of life but in contemporaneously enacted drama. Thus mind emerges." [Dewey, *Experience and Nature* (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1958), p. 141.] Dewey theorizes that communication results in "shared experience."

[37] Carroll C. Arnold, quoted in Thomas W. Benson, "Rhetoric as a Way of Being," *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), pp. 295-296.

[38] Mary Louise Pratt, *Toward a Speech-Act Theory of Literary Discourse* (Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1977), pp. 113-116. Pratt describes "speech-acts" as instances when writer and reader influence one another, the rhetor "resigning the floor" to the audience as the speaker requests permission to be heard and seeks to appeal to the audience to get his or her message across. In the transaction, both parties influence each other's being, and both are in a state where they can potentially transform each other's identity.

[39] J.G.A. Pocock, quoted in John Toews, "Intellectual History After the Linguistic Turn: The Autonomy of Meaning and the Irreducibility of Experience," *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 92, No. 4 (Oct., 1987), p. 892.

[40] Toews, p. 885. Toews here is reviewing the work of fellow historian Dominick LaCapra. See LaCapra's *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, and Language* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983), pp. 23-69.

[41] This is what Edwin Black means when he borrows from T.S. Eliot to explain the critic's endeavor as "seek[ing] an interpretation of the discourse that realizes all that is in it and that aims 'to see the object as it really is." (Black (1973), p. 48. Stephen Lucas concludes that the task "for historians and critics alike" is to "elucidate rhetorical transactions. Both share an abiding interest in the study of people as rhetorical animals, and both hold as controlling premises that language is a powerful means of social inducement. . . ." [Lucas, "The Schism in Rhetorical Scholarship," *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, Second Edition, ed. Carl R. Burgchardt (State College, PA: Strata, 2000), p. 102.] Historian William J. Bowsma argues similarly that texts reveal a "vast rhetorical production" in which "the creative interpretation of experience also shapes experience." Bowsma concludes that a "history of ideas" is no longer valid given the dissolution of the idea that thought is of highest value and somehow separate from physical existence. He also asserts that experience, both physical and nonphysical, is translated and made sense of in language. Thus, history must study how people have formulated meaning over the centuries. [Bowsma, "Intellectual History in the 1980s: From History of Ideas to History of Meaning," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 12 (Autumn 1981), p. 279.]

[42] See Toews, p. 885. Toews describes LaCapra's concern to be that "the intricate internal dynamics by which meaning is constituted in great texts will be ignored by historians taught to 'gut' texts for information about an extratextual reality."

[43] Brinkley, pp. 143-144.

[44] Campbell and Jamieson, p. 442. Campbell and Jamieson argue that in each classification of a genre there exist two heuristic benefits. The first of these is the suggestion of "an ideal or model. Such classifications are the basis of evaluative comparisons—this is better, this is more fully realized, and the like." The second of these is a comparison/contrast value that "form[s] the basis for strategic evaluations—e.g., this style was chosen, but an alternative style would have been preferable because of its ability to accomplish 'x' objective."

[45] Black (1973), pp. 56-57.

[46] Black, "The Sentimental Style as Escapism," *Rhetorical Questions: Studies of Public Discourse* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1992), p. 98.

[47] According to Northrup Frye, "The basis of generic criticism is rhetorical, in the senses that the genre is determined by the conditions established between the poet and his public. . . . The purpose of criticism by genres is not so much to classify as to clarify traditions and affinities, thereby bringing out a large number of literary relationships that would not be noticed as long as there was no context established for them." See Frye, "Rhetorical Criticism: The Study of Genres," *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays by Northrup Frye* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 247-248.

[48] Campbell and Jamieson, p. 418. Campbell and Jamieson loosely define genre as a "constellation of substantive, situational, and stylistic elements" and contend that these elements are somehow fused together by some "internal dynamic." I define it somewhat differently—agreeing with the contention that genres are held together by cohering "internal dynamics," but arguing that this internal dynamic is the *style* of the discourse. To avoid confusion between "style" and "stylistic elements," I have steered clear of using Campbell and Jamieson's loose definition.

[49] Ibid., p. 420.

[50] Black (1992), p. 101. Here, Black examines a "sentimental style" he identifies as present in the oratory and fiction of the nineteenth-century America. Black identifies several forms utilized by the sentimental style, but declares it is the function of the forms that allows the rhetorical critic to examine them in terms of style. Also, for a more thorough understanding of the definitions of the terms form and genre that will be used here and the relationship between them, see Black's discussion of both before he gives this explanation of style.

[51] Black uses "genre" and "style" almost interchangeably, but seems to use "style" in a more strict sense. Whereas "genre" refers to all external relations between forms, it is the "style" of the genre that establishes those relationships. The difference is subtle, but present.

[52] Hariman, p. 3.

[53] Hofstadter, "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), p. 5, 6.

[54] Hariman, 181-184. "The study of communication was not a phenomenological exploration of a state of consciousness, as in the act of speaking or listening or deciding; rather it was an inventory of the forms of ordinary communicative practice as its practitioners could recognize and manipulate them. Rather than treat the gap between individual experiences and social practices as a philosophical problem, the art of rhetoric offered individual actors the means to orient self toward other through discourse on a practical, continuing, contingent, and open-ended basis" (p. 183).

[55] The questions Thomas W. Benson asks in his study of a protest of the Vietnam War at Pennsylvania State University in May 1972 are good examples of questions directed to this audience-centered end: "How did the speaker's attempt to draw upon images of themselves, their listeners, and other human agents to achieve their ends? What actions did listeners take to constitute themselves in the situation? What evidence does the transaction provide as to the ways in which rhetoric can function as a way of being?" See Benson, p. 298.

[56] Signer, p. ix.

[57] Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, rev. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1992), p. 229.

[58] Alexander Hamilton, "Federalist No. 1," *The Federalist*. ed. Benjamin F. Wright. New York: Metro Books, 1961.

[59] Acknowledging that a deliberative democratic scheme was best, the Constitution was framed to protect deliberation and prevent insurrection led by irrational forces. See Cass R. Sunstein, *Designing Democracy: What Constitutions Do* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 6-10. Sunstein defines "deliberative democracy" as combining "political accountability with a high degree of reflectiveness and a general commitment to reason-giving" (pp. 6-7). For Sunstein, "Democracy comes with its own internal morality—the internal morality of democracy. This internal morality requires constitutional protection of many individual rights. . . . A deliberative approach to democracy, and to a constitution, is closely attuned to the problems, even the pathologies, associated with deliberation among like-minded people" (p. 7).

[60] See Brecht, *The Resistable Rise of Arturo Ui* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1994). For an enlightening analysis of Brecht's advocacy of critical alienation, see Signer's discussion of Brecht's response to demagogy.

[61] Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage, 1963), pp. 24-25.

[62] Ibid.

[63] See Ibid., p. 26. For Hofstadter, resentment of the intellectual succeeds resentment of intellect, for "it is not only the status of certain vocational groups which we have in mind, but the value attached to a certain mental quality."

[64] Ibid., p. 35.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1941), pp. 11-12.

[67] Ibid., p. 12.

[68] Signer, p. xxvi.

[69] Robert Asen and Daniel C. Brouwer, "John Dewey and the Public Sphere," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 39, no. 3 (Winter 2003), p. 158.

[70] John Dewey, "Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us," (1939) from *John Dewey: The Political Writings*, ed. Debra Morris and Ian Shapiro (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett, 1993), p. 242.

[71] Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Athens, OH: Swallow Press, 1954), p. 208.

CHAPTER 2
DEPRESSION POPULISM & THE ORIGINS OF ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM

The case against intellect is founded upon a set of fictional and wholly abstract antagonisms. Intellect is pitted against feeling, on the ground that it is somehow inconsistent with warm emotion. It is pitted against character, because it is widely believed that intellect stands for mere cleverness, which transmutes easily into the sly or the diabolical. It is pitted against practicality, since theory is held to be opposed to practice and 'purely' theoretical mind is so much disesteemed. It is pitted against democracy, since intellect is felt to be a form of distinction that defies egalitarianism. Once the validity of these antagonisms is accepted, then the case for intellect, and by extension for the intellectual, is lost.[1]
--Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*

Can freedom become a burden, too heavy for man to bear, something he tries to escape from? Why then is it that freedom is for many a cherished goal and for others a threat?[2]
--Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom*

The dissidence that swept the United States following the economic collapse of the late 1920s found its most virulent form of expression in the tradition of American populism. It was in a transformation of this broad-based democratic tradition into an ideology much more sinister, and ultimately anti-democratic, that Long and Coughlin molded their ideas. In the public sphere of the 1930s, both men would find distinct voices that would move America closer than it ever had been to the dark clutches of authoritarianism. The anti-intellectualism of the political styles of both men was the principal force driving their rhetorical success.

Though H.L. Mencken described Long as "simply a backwoods demagogue of the oldest and most familiar model—impudent, blackguardly, and infinitely prehensile,"[3] such a treatment looks mockingly past the enormous amount of influence he wielded. Similar assessments of Coughlin do the same. Both men's popular appeals rendered them able to challenge a president with one of the strongest electoral mandates in American political history. Antithetical to rational dialogue—and a dominant force in the mind of 1930s America—Long and Coughlin's rhetoric cannot be dismissed as simple demagogy. To heed Einstein's familiar warning that everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler, the demagogy of both men

must be considered as systematic means to gain social control of an audience already preconditioned to give up their freedom.

The Depression Populism that grossly typifies Long and Coughlin's sociopolitical ideologies was effective in securing a brand of "big man" politics premised on the submission of its followers to the leader. Facilitating such submission, the rhetoric of Long and Coughlin negotiated a social reality among their followers in which intellect was demeaned and cast off as a cause of America's economic woes. However, and more interestingly, not only was the substance of both men's rhetoric explicitly hostile to intellect—it was stylistically so as well. Adopting an anti-intellectual rhetorical style, Long and Coughlin ultimately incapacitated the intellect of their audience after capturing their minds with a comforting vision of reality that played to their prejudices and eased them of their anxieties. Rendered passive to this unfolding yet completely satiating vision of a world that was much more complicated than either man allowed, both men's followers cast aside intellectual capability and embraced a blissful ignorance that described itself as moral. Placing their own morality as superior to and inconsistent intellectual capability, they were able to wholeheartedly slip into the trap of Long and Coughlin's style and assume themselves better people for so doing. What made the anti-intellectual style satisfying to the appetites of Long and Coughlin's audience is one of the principal questions that must be answered if the anti-intellectual style is to be properly understood in terms of genre.

If a genre links a "class of artifacts" to "an undercurrent of history,"[4] an understanding of anti-intellectualism as genre should first make sense of the situations in which that undercurrent becomes manifest. Hence, to understand anti-intellectualism as style, the rhetorical critic must also consider anti-intellectualism as the product of political, cultural, and social situations. More

specifically, anti-intellectualism ought to be analyzed in terms of "how passions, desires, anxieties change and develop as a *result of* the social process," evolving to become "specific forms" with "productive force."[5] In other words, one of the tasks of this thesis is to understand the sorts of situations in which the anti-intellectual style might find an audience. Such is the purpose of this second chapter. What makes anti-intellectualism appealing to large groups of people? How does the scorn of intellect relate to other social compulsions that conjointly come into existence, i.e., the desire to submit to authority almost unthinkingly? What were the conditions of the 1930s that allowed the anti-intellectual style to capture the minds of so many Americans so quickly and to infect the public sphere with the voracity it did?

The response of many Americans to the angst of the Depression was distinctly anti-intellectual, a reaction to the travails of the 1930s. Part of this reaction was the need so many had for simple solutions to explain complex circumstances, to seek certain and absolute answers in times when little was certain or absolute. Intellect—always seeking to question, probe, and thoroughly analyze—rarely provides such security and often undermines it. Rejecting intellectual values meant rejecting the uncertainty and tolerance of ambiguity that accompanies intellectual exercise. In addition, anti-intellectualism offered those hurt most by the Depression, the "almost-haves," an outlet for the discontent and frustration that must have daily eaten away at their being. If panaceas could be prescribed and the wretched upper-class held responsible for their lofty and irresponsible wastrel ways, then Longites and Coughlinites would gain some certainty in a time when uncertainty so occupied Americans' thoughts as to render existence unbearable. The anti-intellectualism of Depression Populism offered itself as a solution to America's vast and complicated problems, taking advantage of a situation that found so many Americans willing to grab onto whatever certainty was available no matter how bad its dogmatic

bite. In turn, the anti-intellectual style functioned as an opiate on which millions of Americans would find themselves dependent for some four to six years. To understand the function of the opiate, one must first understand the addict and nature of the dependency.

The "Almost-Haves," Depression Populism, & the Grounding of Anti-Intellectualism

Determining to whom Long and Coughlin's message appealed has been as serious, as surprising, and as sobering a task for historians as it was for journalists in the 1930s. As Alan Brinkley notes, "observers attempting to diagnose the nature of the two movements and expecting to find only the destitute, the indigent, and the ignorant, often expressed surprise when they discovered, as the *New Republic* did in 1935, that Long and Coughlin seemed to be rallying the "'lower middle class,' 'small businessmen and professionals,' in a 'militant and honorable protest.'"[6] Far from the poorest of the poor, the majority of Long and Coughlin's adherents were men and women of the lower middle class who were likely to have lost significant savings in the financial collapses precipitating the Depression. Similar to the audiences Hitler found in Germany and Mussolini discovered in Italy,[7] a large section of Long and Coughlin's audiences were "men and women clinging precariously to hard-won middle-class lifestyles; people with valued but imperiled stakes in their local communities."[8] This lower middle-class, "lacking institutionalized roles on the political scene, . . . looked in times of crisis to a leader whose boldness and aggressiveness would combat the power and arrogance of the 'big shots' and bureaucrats while not threatening the capitalist system to which they prescribed."[9] The potential of the lower middle-class to fall prey to such leaders prompted Reinhold Niebuhr to refer to them as "pawns for Fascism."[10] Though both Long and Coughlin operated in different regions of the country, their rhetoric appealed to the same groups of people across these very different areas. Rather than dividing the United States into north and south, urban and rural, industrialist and

agrarian, Long and Coughlin struck a deeper commonality that resounded across these historical divides and bridged together a lower middle-class resistance that defied regional differences.

Long appealed first to the struggling yeoman farmers of his native Northern Protestant Louisiana. Then, as the Depression wore on, he targeted these appeals to hard-pressed agrarians across the South who increasingly found themselves with less and less. In his 1928 gubernatorial race, Long united Louisiana Catholics and Protestants in a storm of discontent. Yet, he also offered solutions and simple explanations in complex times. By talk of his candidacy he conjured a hope that he might just be the prodigal son Louisiana needed to pull the state out of what V.O. Key characterized as "a case of arrested development."[11] Winning the 1928 race overwhelmingly, Long rose from his previous position of railroad commissioner to the governor's mansion. In the next four years he would build what was perhaps the most comprehensive state political machine the United States has ever experienced. Eventually, Long's successful politicking would win him a large following across the South and West that included not just agrarians, but struggling professionals and businesspersons whose livelihoods the Depression seriously threatened. Taking a Senate seat in 1932, Long became a household name, a champion of the common man who made headlines across the country. Poised to influence the 1936 re-election campaign of President Roosevelt, Long was assassinated on the evening of September 7, 1935.

Coughlin's original audience was altogether different. The radio priest's broadcasting career started when he brokered a deal with Detroit radio station WJR to transmit his sermons from the small parish he would make famous—the Shrine of the Little Flower. Coughlin's first broadcast occurred on the third Sunday in October in 1926, and, according to his 1933 authorized autobiography, his hopes were high that he might "let the Little Flower have her day

in preaching the Gospel to every creature."[12] Originally a small, local, and devout Catholic group, Coughlin's listeners gradually grew to consist of a larger and more diverse following that extended throughout the Midwest, and eventually to the Middle Atlantic and New England regions. From his modest start, Coughlin moved from administering Mass and delivering religious sermons to giving political speeches that were broadcast by thirty-three stations and reached as many as forty million people.[13] Of Coughlin's Sunday sermons, Brinkley writes:

> In urban neighborhoods throughout the East and Midwest—not only Irish communities, but German, Italian, and Polish; not only Catholic areas, but Protestant and, for a time, even Jewish—many residents long remembered the familiar experience of walking down streets lined with row houses, triple-deckers, or apartment buildings and hearing out of every window the voice of Father Coughlin blaring from the radio. You could walk for blocks, they recalled, and never miss a word.[14]

As Coughlin moved toward more secular issues, first by speaking more broadly about issues of social justice, and then by denouncing Communism, and then by discussing economic issues most directly, his audience burgeoned, reaching the lower middle-class as it extended from urban to rural communities, from Minnesota and Missouri to New York and Baltimore.[15]

Long and Coughlin rose first as forces within their own individual regions. However, as they came onto the national stage, their respective audiences merged similar groups from different regions of the country in a common, though loosely-defined, ideology. Although Long's audience was more agrarian and Coughlin's audience more urban and industrialist, these very different audiences were united in their suffering. Both groups were brought together through the middle-class resentment and angry rhetoric of Long and Coughlin. Intellectuals were often viewed by the mass of society as controlling societal wealth and living in a world far

removed from the material conditions of reality. Demonizing the intellectual was an easy way to explain the Depression and assuage lower middle-class angst.

Roosevelt staffer and devotee Hugh S. Johnson is sometimes accused of linking the men together in his attacks on both in March of 1935.[16] Nevertheless, the national press had pointed out the connection long before.[17] The comparison was only made more explicitly, and more frequently, after Johnson's denunciation. After the middle of 1934, when Coughlin made a final break with the Roosevelt Administration, both men's audiences seemed to align more as both gained more national attention. The Johnson attacks in 1935 enhanced this effect, and at Coughlin's National Union for Social Justice rally that May, there were newsboys successfully selling copies of Long's *American Progress*.[18] Though Long fans often admired Coughlin and Coughlin fans often admired Long, neither man was very trusting of the other.[19] While I am arguing that both men were part of a broad-based national movement, their organizations were very much separate from each other. That said, there is no doubt that both men were connected in the American mind, and it is from this connection that historians like Brinkley are able to claim that Long and Coughlin shared the same ideology. What was this ideology that was able to overcome differences that had existed long before the Depression and the emergence of either man on the national stage? What were the set of ideas able to unite lower middle-class Americans that had before the Depression stood so disunited?

Deriving a specific ideology from the writings of Long or Coughlin, as Brinkley notes, is a difficult task. However, Long and Coughlin did both share a common ideology that I term as Depression Populism. According to Brinkley, both men

> provided, first, an affirmation of threatened values and institutions, and a vision of a properly structured society in which those values and institutions could thrive. They suggested,

> second, an explanation of the obstacles to this vision, a set of villains and scapegoats upon whom it was possible to blame contemporary problems. And they offered, finally, a prescription for reform, resting upon carefully restricted expansion of the role of government.[20]

Depression Populism, more than anything, was a reaction to modernity, to the displacement experienced by those that suffered most in the midst of the Depression and thought it a result of modern capitalism gone awry. While many on the left embraced socialist and Marxist agendas,[21] the Longites and Coughlinites embraced a vision of America constructed by a sentimentalizing of community and a juxtaposition of this vision with the evils of modern capitalism. In no way did Long or Coughlin even come close to resembling the New Left dissident groups that were, by contrast, staunchly devoted to the idea of the intellectual as a positive force in society. Instead, Long and Coughlin resumed old arguments, many of which were borrowed from America's Populist heritage, and retailored them to the circumstances of the 1930s and, more significantly, to their own needs and designs for grabbing power.

Much of the Depression Populist ideology was reconstructed Jeffersonian idealism, a replaying and redefinition of the Hamilton-Jefferson tensions that are so fundamental to an understanding of American populism at its most basic level. Though America by the Depression had certainly taken the more Hamiltonian route, the Jeffersonian ideal of a republican-agrarian class of common men was still very much in the minds of many Americans. Indeed, as it did in the economic violence of the American industrial revolution following the Civil War, this vision rose to a new dominance with what seemed the failure of modern capitalism in the 1930s. No longer the agrarian republic the Jeffersonian puritan might imagine, egalitarian ideas of a morally-upright yeoman class still held sway with those who might take advantage of the old

arguments and transform them into something revolutionary, or rather, reactionary. Despite the frequent citing of the framers by both Long and Coughlin, and contrary to their assertions that they sought to restore community and the dignity of the common man after capturing America back from the wealth and spoil of the capitalist American aristocracy, neither man's movement was at all democratic—not in organizational structure, certainly not in rhetorical approach, and absolutely not in any genuine ideological sense. Long and Coughlin took romanticisms of the past, repackaged them, and appointed themselves leaders of a reactionary ideology aimed ostensibly at the recreation of a past that both men knew could not be realistically attained.

While the fault of Brinkley's study lies in his inattention to style and the renegotiation of social reality that both men were able to accomplish with similar aims, he does a remarkable job extracting an ideology from the historical contexts of both men's rhetorical careers. In paying especial attention to the audiences both men appealed to and partially created, or at least solidified, Brinkley's work is invaluable to an understanding of just how and why Long and Coughlin's audiences were willing to submit to the demagogy of both men so easily. Demagogues no doubt exert a remarkable force over their audience, though they do not merely wave a magic wand to cast a spell over their audience. The audience must already be primed and partially formed by historical and social circumstances to fall victim to the demagogue's magic. While it is no doubt the rhetorician's job to understand the spell concocted, he must understand that the spell does not come to wield its power in a vacuum. The power both men acquired from their audience the audience was already, at least partially, preconditioned to give up.

The demagogue, for Fromm, "will usually exhibit in a more extreme and clear-cut way the particular personality structure of those to whom his doctrines appeal; he can arrive at a clearer and more outspoken formulation of certain ideas for which his followers are already

prepared psychologically."[22] Just as the follower is somewhat predisposed to the leader's ideas, so is he or she somewhat predisposed to his or her style. The style of the leader, in Long and Coughlin's case, distinctly anti-intellectual, beyond mere content functions as a productive social force. The anti-intellectual style takes these predispositions and shapes them into a constellation of rhetorical forms designed to gain social control, wielding authority over the audience and forcing its submission. Gerald K. Smith, Long's obsessive follower and president of the Share Our Wealth Society, admitted as much in an interview with the *New Republic*: "We did not create a state of mind; we merely discovered and recognized a state of mind that has been created by conditions."[23]

Depression Populism: The Transformed Result of an American Tradition

The vision of man Long and Coughlin proclaimed to uphold was that of the common man and woman struggling against powerful forces far beyond their control. However, both the self-righteous senator and the fiery radio priest promised that these powerful forces could be brought down easily if only simple reform were passed: the limiting of large fortunes, the remonetarization of silver, and guaranteed sums of wealth to be promised by the government. Long and Coughlin, like the activists of the People's Party before them, pitted the common man and toiling worker against the wealthy industrialist and the corrupt politician. The difference, however, was that while the People's Party and other Populist movements before the 1930s stressed local organization and a grassroots politics that bore a bottom-up structure, Long and Coughlin articulated a national movement that centered on personalities. Long and Coughlin demanded public investiture in their ability to procure necessary reforms. Unlike the Populists of the 1890s, reform was to emerge from an input of interests that were articulated and aggregated from a centralized political organization working on behalf of the people's interests.

In contrast to earlier Populist movements such as the Farmer's Alliance, Long and Coughlin omitted community structures, local leaders, and local participation in politics. The elimination of intermediary institutions and the focus of leadership and authority in the cult of personality demanded complete political subordination. As in the case of Long's Louisiana, reform was to tickle down to the people, the result of a top-bottom political structure that would be anathema to the Populist of the 1890s.

On the Senate floor, in a demonstration of his supposed legislative sincerity, Long once said, "All I care about is what the boys in the creek think of me."[24] Similarly, Coughlin, in his response to Johnson's 1925 denunciation, claimed to be fighting for the impoverished, the disadvantaged, and the respectable common man. Telling Johnson that "these inarticulate people for whom I speak will never forget you and your Wall Streeters," Coughlin claims his own purpose to be "motivated by the love of God and by the love of my inarticulate fellow men."[25] Both men asserted that they were representing the ill-defined poor mass of people with whom only they could understand and empathize. It also is indicative of both men's transformation of the Populist ideology. Historian David M. Kennedy concludes that Long and Coughlin both spoke in what was

> an American-made idiom. It was audible to listeners as far back as Alexis de Tocqueville in the days of Andrew Jackson. It swelled to a roar in the day of the People's Party upheavals of the 1890s and never fully subsided. Often cast in the rough cadences of untutored, rural American speech, the populist dialect gave voice to the fears of the powerless and the animosities of the alienated. . . . It was a always a language of resentment, of raw class antagonism, edged with envy and grudge. In the charged atmosphere of the 1930s, it could easily become a language of reprisal.[26]

While Kennedy's observation does seem to largely be true, the resentment and fear driving Long and Coughlin's reaction to the status quo broke with the Populist tradition insofar as it took the Durkheimean anomie that populism seemed intent to cast off and used it instead to exploit the inarticulate masses Long and Coughlin claimed to so truly represent. Instead of local activism and individual agency, they encouraged an amorphous brand of mass politics. The common man was to be celebrated and mobilized, but at the expense of intellect and rational debate.

Foundations in American Populism

In order to understand how Long and Coughlin used the populist political tradition to suit their own purposes, it is first important to gain an understanding of American populism as a cultural force and in what state it resided in the American mind. This requires a reconsideration of populism, which was still strong in the historical memory of Long and Coughlin's audiences. Historian David Hicks claims "The Populist philosophy thus boiled down finally to two fundamental propositions; one, that the government must restrain the selfish tendencies of those who profited at the expense of the poor and needy; the other, that the people, not the plutocrats, must control the government."[27] For Hicks, populism was an economically-determined response to long-standing oppressive practices that put farmers at a serious financial disadvantage.

However, Richard Hofstadter finds core psychological elements in the Populist ideology that anticipates many of the arguments advanced in this thesis. According to Hofstadter, populism was a response to financial sufferings and status decline: it was a response to the social stigma experienced by many disadvantaged farmers. Concerned with "rank in society," the farmer was concerned that "he was losing in status and self-respect."[28] Populist politics was thus a means to reinforce the values of the farmer and counter emerging claims of urban

superiority.[29] As a result, populism, for Hofstadter, "seems very strongly to foreshadow some aspects of the cranky pseudo-conservatism of our time."[30]

Triggered by a sense of class resentment, populism "has survived in our time, partly as an undercurrent of provincial resentments, popular and 'democratic' rebelliousness and suspiciousness, and nativism."[31] Though Hofstadter's findings have been harshly criticized and many of his conclusions softened as a result of subsequent study,[32] the dark underside of populism he identifies does seem to have some truth to it. The farmer and modest workman's confrontation with modernity produced some degree of psychological distress and populism was rooted in this distress and involved clear psychological patterns. Rendered powerless by the growing "bigness"of agricultural markets and price determinations beyond the farmers' control, there were compelling reasons for the farmer to embrace views or explanations that would at least provide some comfort for the anxious farmer. Populism was more than economic protest. It provided the distressed agrarian some psychological satisfaction. Looking closely at the social psychology of populism, there was indeed solace to be taken in celebrating the common man and lauding the agrarian foundations of American democracy. It provided political organizations designed to counter the threat of industrialism. However romanticized, populism was a source of some psychological security—an attempt to regain a sense of efficacy at the grassroots level vis-à-vis community organization.

Though Hofstadter's interpretation of the Populist ideology is challenged by many historians, that this pseudo-conservative proclivity appeared so blatantly in Long and Coughlin's ideology some thirty years later does seem to bolster the validity of Hofstadter's interpretation. Both Long and Coughlin grew up in lower middle-class backgrounds in areas that were influenced by the Populist tides of previous generations. Both were inculcated with ideas from

this dark underbelly of populism that will be explored more thoroughly in my discussion of anti-intellectualism. Fromm postulates the leader's character "shows more sharply certain traits to be found in his followers" in that "by the accidental circumstances of his upbringing and his individual experiences these same traits are developed to a marked degree which for the group result from its social position."[33] The creeping pseudo-conservatism of populism was certainly present in both Long and Coughlin's upbringing, and both men most certainly inherited many of its features.

Long grew up in Winn Parish, Louisiana, a community with a strong Populist tradition. Throughout the late nineteenth-century, Winn Parish was well-known for its staunch commitment to equalitarian principles and resistance to the status quo. "Jacobin clubs" were present throughout the parish, and Populist publications, speeches, and other political activities abounded.[34] After the decline of the People's Party, citizens in Winn Parish found other political avenues by which to exert their social and political activism. Winn was one of the few parishes in Louisiana to have a strong Socialist Party and in 1908 proudly elected a socialist to Congress.[35]

Like Long, Coughlin's early experiences presage the later identification he will have with his audience and the well-worn Populist ideology. Coughlin emerged from humble beginnings, growing up the son of a church sexton in Ontario. His parents were committed to him becoming a priest, and as a result, he received a traditional Catholic education and became acquainted with the Thomist social justice doctrines of Pope Leo XIII.[36] As Coughlin's authorized autobiography fondly records, he grew up in "an ordinary Catholic home" in a friendly, close-knit neighborhood defined by "baseball and football, broken window panes, and the many escapades which are experienced in the normal boy's life. . . ." Coughlin would later mesh

Catholic social justice theory with the populism and lure of small-town community that still permeated Detroit and the rest of the Midwest across which he would come to broadcast.[37]

Both Long and Coughlin spoke in language "steeped in the dominant themes of their nation's history. . . . [They] flourished precisely because they evoked so clearly one of the oldest and most powerful American traditions."[38] Repudiating the centralization of authority, they argued vehemently for

> the wide dispersion of power [that] had formed the core of American social and political protest, the nation's constricted version of a radical tradition, for more than a century. The American Revolution had reflected a profound fear of distant, inaccessible power; and American politics through the first half of the nineteenth century has been permeated with the ideology of republicanism, which rested upon a vision of virtuous and independent citizens living in a nation of general economic equality and broadly distributed authority. The defense of the yeoman farmer, the sturdy freeholder, and the society of small, independent communities of which they were a part underlay two of the dominant political visions of the early nineteenth-century: first, Jeffersonian and then, in somewhat different form, Jacksonian democracy.[39]

The People's Party of the 1890s evoked these same themes of faceless and foreboding centralized power, as did Long and Coughlin, to form "an elaborate explanation of the inequities of a modern industrial economy."[40] From this view, economic problems had more to do with personal greed, government avarice, and a whole host of conspiracies and "sins" against the common man rather than through one's own fault.[41] If only the people, guided by their inward morality, could rule, many of these problems would disappear.

Further, American Populist prejudices were manifest in the careers of both men and described as such by the press. In his biography of Coughlin, Charles Tull asserts that the radio priest "championed inflation, was anti-British and anti-Semitic, and drew large support from the so-called Populist Midwest."[42] Tull is not explicit in his assessment of Coughlin's position as in line with the old populism of the 1890s; but the *New York Times* declared after Coughlin's Madison Square Garden address on May 22, 1935, that the event was a "reincarnation of the multitude that swarmed the old Garden to hear William Jennings Bryan in his arraignment of the gold standard in 1896."[43]

Also parallel to the populism of the 1890s, Long and Coughlin's messages mirrored the regional differences in the populism of the Bryan's People's Party. Long's message, like the Southern populists before him, was broader in scope and attacked the maldistribution of wealth and accumulation of fortune. Coughlin, on the other hand, like the Midwestern populists he succeeded, focused more specifically on fiscal and monetary issues.[44] The priest demanded monetary reform, "eschewing revolution" and coming in accord with the feeling of past populists that "they could improve their lot with their own hands if opportunity were to be equalized. . . ."[45] Both Long and Coughlin wholeheartedly subscribed to the old Populists' egalitarian dictum, holding true to Liah Greenfeld's assessment of America as "a rigorously monotheistic nation, equality being its one true god."[46]

Depression Populism and Ostensible Ideology

Whether the Populists of the People's Party are seen as primarily "cranky pseudo-conservatives," or as passionate citizens fighting for economic and political rights and the germinal beginnings of the New Left,[47] Long and Coughlin's messages can in no way be used to equate either man as a propagator of the old Populist ideology. While Long and Coughlin took

what arguments suited their purposes from the old Populist cause, they did not in reality propose a Populist agenda. Much of Depression Populism's espoused ideology was only ostensible, shielding Long and Coughlin's true purpose—the accumulation of power. Like Hitler, Long and Coughlin gave the people what they want. To them, "The important thing is not what the genius who created an idea has in mind, but what, in what form, and with what success the prophets of this idea transmit it to the broad masses."[48] This is not to say that Long and Coughlin did not believe in what they preached or were not guided to some degree by the ideas of Populist thinkers and politicians before them. They most certainly were to some extent. It is to say, though, that this is not the complete story.

Whether conscious or not, Long and Coughlin acted against the positive tenets of Populism which historians fond of the movement are so willing to document. While "Populism developed among people who were deeply rooted in social and economic networks of rural communities,"[49] Long and Coughlin's movements did not. Depression Populism took the egalitarian-republican ideals of Jefferson, Jackson, and the People's Party, and transformed them into a popular appeal. Its message was designed to capture the sympathies of those who longed for the power the movements of Jefferson, Jackson, Gompers, and Bryan truly did bring to the people. Depression Populism brought no such power. It was in many ways but an attempt to gain power, a lie deceptively shrouded in the memory of an ideology that once was connected with "the rhythms of family and community life in the country-side, with the face-to-face networks of rural trade and the rounds of 'swap work' among neighboring farmers, with the tilling of crops and relations of production on the land (including the relations between landowners and laborers), with the bonds and divisions of rural people and townsmen. . . ."[50]

It may be valuable at this point to contrast Depression Populism with the many other ideologies of the Left that challenged the New Deal. The ideology Long and Coughlin espoused had little in common with the agenda of the Left. Compared to the League for Independent Political Action and the Farmer-Labor Party (which was more consistent with the Midwestern Populist heritage than either Long and Coughlin were to Populist ideals they advocated), Depression Populism was distinctly anti-liberal, distinctly anti-democratic, and distinctly anti-intellectual. Indeed, members of these other dissident groups took measures to separate themselves from, in the words of Wisconsin Congressman Tom Amlie, "irresponsible demagogues."[51] Amlie was not alone in describing what I define as Depression Populism as a "'new mass movement' being 'directed by the Longs, the Coughlins, and the other essentially anti-democratic elements.'"[52] Most ironically, instead of strengthening community and grassroots politics, Depression Populism ripped asunder many of these parochial bonds and undermined the actual power the ordinary man exercised. However, before getting too far ahead in my analysis, it is important to first consider the organizational structure of the Long and Coughlin movements.

Long and Coughlin ran their organizations with tight-fists. The Share Our Wealth Society and the National Union for Social Justice were anything but democratic grassroots organizations. Depression Populism

> adopted the rhetoric of populist localism, but little of its substance. Nowhere in their messages was there any vision of the active building of local economic institutions; nowhere did they suggest that an individual or a community could counter the strength of the modern consolidated economy through independent, local efforts. What was most conspicuously absent from the Long and Coughlin movements, in short, and what differentiated them most

> clearly from their populist forbears, was a genuine belief in possibilities. Neither the leaders nor the followers would admit it, even to themselves, but there was in their vision a thinly veiled sense of resignation, an unspoken belief that it was by the 1930s already too late for a fundamental restructuring of American society.[53]

Jefferson resisted the role of a strong and centralized federal government. Jackson quashed the evil and alien danger posed by the National Bank. Bryan denounced big government and business interests in an economy and was hostile to laissez-faire economics and pro-business governments. All three, though, emphasized individuals taking independent roles in their organizations. In contrast, Long and Coughlin called for the people to hand over authority to their own highly-centralized organizations. In doing so, Long and Coughlin argued, the people might unite and truly regain power. Yet, always in the background, existed a lack of sincerity on the part of both men, of realization that so much of their radical agenda was little more than farce. Perhaps this is what made critics like Raymond Gram Swing so nervous about the possibility of Long and Coughlin's popular support, grounded in so little substance, aligning with corporate capitalism and forming a fascist movement in the United States.[54]

Both Long and Coughlin's national organizations demonstrate well the anti-democratic nature of their mission. In the case of the National Union for Social Justice, "The vagueness of goals and Coughlin's tightly held power suggested to many that the NUSJ was an authoritarian enterprise strongly reminiscent of European fascism."[55] Indeed, Coughlin "appointed the executive board, wrote the constitution, drafted resolutions, proposed legislation, established committees, dictated rules and regulations, and appointed national officers. Initially, he stated, 'I am the Union for Social Justice.'"[56] Long's organization and distaste for democracy is evident in any study of the political machinery he constructed in Louisiana. As even his sympathetic

biographer T. Harry Williams acknowledged, Long "exulted in the use of power, and he erected in Louisiana a power structure that had no counterpart in any other state. He sometimes took shortcuts to attain his ends and seemed to scorn the slow procedures of democracy."[57] As for the Share Our Wealth Society, Long and the sycophantic Smith wielded control over the several Share Our Wealth chapters that sprung up across the country. Any chapter "would receive 'official' recognition merely by writing Senator Huey P. Long, Washington, D.C., and informing him of its existence, the names of its officers, and the number of its members."[58] Like the NUSJ, Share Our Wealth policy and purse strings were controlled by a central headquarters, and all of the Society's funding came from the Long machine in Louisiana.[59] The organization's Baton Rouge headquarters would also issue the organization's press releases and propaganda. When Long called for letters from his followers, they were to be addressed not to his followers' congressional offices or other politicians, but to him.[60]

Dictators and Desperation: Anti-Intellectualism & the Rise of the Authoritarian

Long and Coughlin's authoritarian personalities were reflected in the structure of their organizations and personal attitudes. Brinkley argues that Long, Coughlin, and their followers operated out of a sense of desperation more than anything else. According to Brinkley, they had lost faith in "possibility." No longer could they convince themselves without mass delusion that circumstances were going to get better—thus, enter Long and Coughlin. Both leaders tried to offer explanations "of when and why society went astray and how restoration can be accomplished."[61] However, these explanations rarely went beyond diatribes against the moneyed aristocracy and the "bigness" of corrupt government and business. Never did solutions move beyond panaceas. As Raymond Gram Swing assesses, Long and Coughlin's movements resemble Fascism insofar as they seemed designed to "give a lift" to the despondent,[62] to provide

some hope in a time when to hope seemed all but possible. The desperation Brinkley identifies and the design Swing deduces as the function of Long and Coughlin's rhetoric is rooted, as Fromm might explain, in a "feeling of isolation and powerlessness."[63] Fromm quotes Julian Green:

> I knew that we counted little in comparison to the universe, I knew that we were nothing; but to be so immeasurably nothing seems in some way to both overwhelm, and at the same time to reassure. Those figures, those dimensions beyond the range of human thought, are utterly overpowering. Is there anything whatsoever to which we can cling? . . . We peer down into a huge dark abyss. And we are afraid.[64]

While many never confront this sense of powerlessness, Fromm argues that this sense of anomie, or "moral aloneness," is nonetheless present.[65] Feelings of isolation and powerlessness cause people to recoil and escape from the burden of negative freedom that is created when the "primary," or parochial bonds of traditional society that do not differentiate the self from society, are ripped asunder by modernity. It is my contention that the anxiety of the Great Depression and people's sense of total loss and displacement in their surroundings increased these feelings in the years just prior to Long and Coughlin's rise on the national scene.

Returning to the "cranky pseudo-conservatism" Hofstadter identified in Populism, it is again crucial to this analysis to consider the Depression Populism of Long and Coughlin as a psychological response to the anxiety brought forth by modernity. Traditional social positions thrown into question, Depression Populism was in part an attempt to regain control of a world dominated by economic and social uncertainty. As was the case for the Populist, the past was a source of comfort for those alienated by modernity and their seeming insignificance in an economy destroyed by reckless capitalism. In a way, the crash of the stock market and the

financial collapse of the country proved to many with whom the historical memory of Populism remained that its earlier claims might just be true. The wealthy banker and industrialist again seemed responsible. As the people found themselves suffering from an anxiety likely much greater than that experienced in the late nineteenth-century, these earlier claims provided convenient explanations of societal woes, and again, powerful mechanisms for social empowerment and psychological security. Hofstadter writes of the earlier Populist response as "mean[ing] to diminish, if possible to get rid of, status differences in American life, to subordinate educated as well as propertied leadership."[66] The pseudo-conservatism Hofstadter characterizes as reactionary and irrational seeks to marginalize differences in individual intellect.

Considering the American mythopoesis that all individuals, with the proper effort, have the opportunity to achieve Alger's American dream, the American Populist tradition thinks it is intelligence (not intellect) and moral rightness that secures this dream—the ability of the common man to succeed. In the Depression, the common man and woman had not succeeded and some explanation had to be found. Depression Populism's explanation greatly parallels the explanation of the People's Party for the agrarian's suffering. In addition, the same hope for populistic democracy is espoused in both ideologies. Rule by the common man was again seen as the proper means to secure the American dream in both the political and economic arena. The intellectual, seen in cahoots with forces opposed to the American dream,[67] was attacked. Coughlin, deriding intellectual arrogance, declared "The divine intelligence of the international bankers has found its deserved place with the theory of the divine right of kings. Both are putrid corpses."[68] The anti-intellectualism Hofstadter identifies as manifest in the Populism of Jackson and Bryan is again manifest in the anti-intellectualism of Long and Coughlin:

> If the people were to rule, if they aspired to get along with as little leadership as possible from educated and propertied classes, whence would their guidance come? The answer was that it could be generated from within. As popular democracy gained strength and confidence, it regained strength and confidence, it reinforced the widespread belief in the superiority of the inborn, intuitive, folkish wisdom over the cultivated, oversophisticated, and self-interested knowledge of the literati and well-to-do. Just as the evangelicals repudiated a learned religion and formally constituted clergy in favor of the wisdom of the heart and direct access to God, so did advocates of egalitarian politics propose to dispense with trained leadership in favor of native practical sense of the ordinary man with its direct access to truth. This preference for the wisdom of the common man flowered, in the most extreme statements of the democratic creed, into a kind of militant anti-intellectualism.[69]

Instead of the conspiratorial, corrupt, and insincere intellectualism of Wall Street bankers, Washington insiders, and industrial moguls, the simple intelligence of the common people provided the answers. Nothing more was needed to reverse the threatening trend of monopolistic capitalism.

Historian Daniel C. Bennett describes Depression demagogy as seeking "to play on the discontents and to intensify the original irrational elements within them."[70] In so doing, the Depression demagogue "sought to seduce his followers into an emotional attachment to his person that would effectively block any group awareness of either the real sources of unhappiness or the real means of solution."[71] Anti-intellectualism enters the picture insofar as it is the intellectual and the quality of intellect Hofstadter describes that threatens society's attempt to anesthetize itself from social anxieties and the feelings of isolation and powerlessness Fromm describes. The intellectual, by his or her very nature, "puts some portion of an apparently stable

world in peril, and no one can wholly predict what will emerge in its place."[72] As Hofstadter describes, "intellect is always on the move against something: some oppression, fraud, illusion, dogma, or interest is constantly falling under the scrutiny of the intellectual class and becoming the object of exposure, indignation, or ridicule."[73] The intellectual does not let society get away with delusion. As a result, movements centered on delusion often attack and disable the intellectual class before any other.[74] More than merely targeting the intellectual, however, these movements target intellect itself as subversive and dangerous.

Intellect and the Authoritarian

The tenth of Coughlin's Sixteen Principles of Social Justice, the platform of Coughlin's National Union for Social Justice, declares that it is "in the duty of government to facilitate and protect. . . against the vested interests of wealth and of intellect."[75] Identifying intellect as a co-conspirator with wealth, Coughlin pits intellect against the common man. That such an antagonism could be so wholly accepted under the persuasion of the authoritarian results in a number of ideological consequences warranting scholarly attention. Three of these ideological consequences come immediately to the forefront: the power of prophet in times of desperation, the need for middle-class atonement and the need to find a scapegoat upon which to pin the woes of the Depression, and the need to separate the moral from the intellectual and place moral intelligence in a position of governance. All three considerations involve approaching authoritarianism and anti-intellectualism as two phenomena that occur in response to social anxiety.

As Burke notes in his study of Hitler, the "prophet" provides "a 'positive' view of life. They can again get the feel of *moving forward*, towards a *goal* (a promissory feature which Hitler makes much)."[76] When hope is hard to muster up and one feels powerless, one may well

"attempt to become a part of a bigger and more powerful whole outside of oneself, to submerge and participate in it."[77] Thus enters the false prophet. The false prophet provides his or her followers with "a new security and a new pride in the participation in the power in which one submerges. One gains also security against the torture of doubt."[78] The United States was deep in the Depression by the time Roosevelt took office in March 1933 and Long and Coughlin began to appear on the national scene. Skepticism of the modern capitalist system and even of the basic structure of American government was plentiful, and Americans found themselves in an economic condition that did not seem to be improving. Though Roosevelt remained popular throughout his first term, as Long and Coughlin became increasingly critical of the president's policies as slow-moving and overly-cautious they picked up an audience that had become disenchanted with the seeming stagnation of America's economic, social, and psychological condition. Long and Coughlin spoke to any who found their "present and future painful to behold. . . . In a situation of acute anomie, they will, under pressure of anxiety . . . , attempt a solution which sets up the family pattern of political relationships.' They will seek succor in a single figure who claims to be able to control the environment."[79]

Long and Coughlin both became false prophets. Powerful and prophetic, Iltis writes of Long's style as "juxtapos[ing] a calming preacherly voice to his impassioned characterization of the source of the nation's trouble. He builds and releases tension through style."[80] As Fromm writes, such a release of tension is indicative of the calm that comes when security is gained and doubt conquered. That the catastrophe of the Depression can be easily explained and a solution just as easily prescribed would certainly seem ludicrous to the rational man or woman. Yet, to the follower of Long or Coughlin, sorely in need of a way to regain control of reality and enter

on some path of seeming progression, such false prophecy offered an escape from burdens too heavy to bear.

Second, the authoritarian impulse offered alongside its anti-intellectual corollary a way for Long and Coughlin to explain the failure of the lower middle-class in a society devoted to the ideology of rugged individualism and the Protestant work ethic.[81] As Burke also astutely identifies in the rhetoric of Hitler,

> if one can hand over his infirmities to a vessel, or 'cause,' outside the self, one can battle an external enemy instead of battling an enemy within. . . . This device is furthermore given a semblance of reason because the individual properly realizes that he is not alone responsible for his condition. There are *inimical* factors on the scene itself. And he wants to have them 'placed,' preferably in a way that would require the minimum change in the ways of thinking to which he is accustomed.[82]

For Burke, this strategy of Hitler is "purificative" and atones the audience of any guilt they might have regarding their inability to succeed. Ceding responsibility of financial failure from oneself to scapegoats—whether industrialists, bankers, corrupt politicians, greed, modern capitalism, etc.—allowed Long and Coughlin's followers to mollify their guilt with "minimum change" to their ways of thinking. As has been noted of their largely lower middle-class following, Long and Coughlin's audience did not oppose capitalism but merely sought to find a way to resolve their own failures in the capitalist system with their acceptance of the capitalist mode of life. The intellectual posed a threat to this resolution. By contrast, the intellectual demanded a level of self-reflection that the failed capitalist could not tolerate instead of merely allowing the failed capitalist to blame his or her failure on the Rockefellers or the Federal Reserve. Intellect was a threat to the psychological comfort of the lower middle-class. The authoritarian offered comfort.

Third, and most significant, is the need of Long and Coughlin to push their audience to separate moral qualities from intellectual qualities while elevating the former over the latter. Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "State a moral case to a ploughman and a professor. The former will decide it as well, and often better than the latter, because he has not been led astray by artificial rules."[83] Jefferson was no means anti-intellectual, but he was speaking to the attitude that somehow intellect was antagonistic to morality. This attitude was integral to the Populist mythology of the common man. As historian Charles Sellers observes of Jackson's "rotation in office" policy, the intent was to keep a good supply of the moral common man in office before they could be infected with the corruption of bureaucratic expertise.[84] Jackson sought to find good, common, moral men for office, and became one of the first politicians to attack the idea of the Washington insider.

America has long accepted the idea that morality is somehow opposed to intellect and that the two work against each other. The origin of this idea can be traced in part to the Protestant antinomian impulse and its coupling with the rise of evangelism and the conversion experience. The Great Awakening and subsequent religious movements continually pit morality against intellect. It is important to note that it can easily be drawn on and used to suit the forces of authoritarianism. Long and Coughlin both spoke in a fashion that took advantage of this traditional antagonism and elevated the moral above the intellectual. What America needed, according to Long and Coughlin, were not pretentious Washington intellectuals, but men of morality and common sense. Billy Sunday once preached, "Lord save us from this off-handed, flabby-cheeked, brittle-boned, weak-kneed, thin-skinned, pliable plastic, spineless, effeminate, three-karat Christianity."[85] Similarly, Long and Coughlin argued that America need be saved

from the same intellectualism. If "Moral warfare makes men hard,"[86] as Sunday once declared, then cautious thought makes them soft.

In addition to this pitting of morality against intellect, Long and Coughlin's ability to portray themselves as on the moral side of the equation is significant. In locating themselves on the side of morality and their enemies on the side of intellect, both men were able to make it seem as if their rise to power was one in the same with the people's rising to power. Swing writes that "for his supporting public Long is the under-dog southern farmer and villager, the suppressed, ignored, and privileged person. He is the personification of their aspirations and their prejudices."[87]

Long's followers, not unlike the priests Nietzsche identifies in the *Genealogy of Morals*, saw themselves as morally superior to the moneyed aristocracy they resented. Swing continues:

> Resentment lies in the hearts of many because of the hardship they bore as children, the dreary hours of work they endured, the advantages they saw given to others but were not fated to enjoy. Hitler tapped that resentment in building up his great German host. Huey Long has tapped it in Louisiana and he is confident that he can tap it in the other forty-seven states.[88]

Coughlin's audience, like Long's, perceive themselves as morally superior. While they might not be able to compete in terms of intellectual prowess, which varies between men, the egalitarian faith in the common man and woman accompanied by the mythology of his or her morality was, as Greenfeld notes, a powerful religion in itself. Hence, the leveling quality of the idea of an inward-derived morality of the common man created the notion of a disconnect between morality and intellect. This disconnect also fostered the distinction between intelligence and intellect that Hofstadter observes. Whereas "Intelligence works within the framework of limited but clearly stated goals, and may be quick to shear away questions of thought that do not

seem to help in reaching them," intellect "examines, ponders, wonders, theorizes, criticizes, imagines. . . . Intellect evaluates evaluations, and looks for meanings in situations as a whole."[89] Intellect is thus more challenging and can often be perceived as ego even when exercised for the benefit of community. For societies fearful of challenge and complexity, intellect is terrifying and can be threatening to the religion of equality. Thus, intellect is characterized as immoral and condemned as useless and troublesome, something exterior, worldly, and corrupting. Juxtaposed to the purity of a deeper, more truthful and inward morality of equals, the corrupting power of intellect is at once both a foil and an explanation for a society that has been led astray grown corrupt when faced with the challenges of modernity.

Moving Minds Through Text: Rhetorical Analyses of the Anti-Intellectual Style

The next two chapters of this thesis will aim to illustrate the anti-intellectual style utilized by Long and Coughlin. The third chapter will assess Long's famous "Every Man a King" oration, and the fourth will examine Coughlin's address, "The National Union for Social Justice." I will examine both speeches through close-textual analysis, focusing "on subtleties of style that are highly individuated."[90] In addition, I will show how each individual discourse functions "in a particular world" so that "the very identity of any given text as inextricably interwoven with its world" can be understood.[91] As we are studying style in terms of its political function, we must understand how text interacts dynamically within its context, both determined by and determining structure simultaneously. A close-textual analysis seeks to understand a discourse as "strain[ing] simultaneously toward autonomous coherence and transparent reference to the world in which it appears."[92] While the referential dimension has a tendency to dominate the observer's assessment at first assessment, the critic seeks out

> the embedded artistic strategy that makes its referential surface appear plausible and natural. In fact, when the artistic imagination engages with the public world, when discourse cannot invoke suspension or disbelief, artistic strategy and referential content become virtually consubstantial.[93]

In assessing both Long and Coughlin's speeches as rhetorical standards representative of other texts they delivered, the following chapters will extract an anti-intellectual style that pervades all of Long and Coughlin's discourse and which may be extended across time in terms of all the differences it has made and will make.

NOTES

[1] Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), pp. 45-46.

[2] Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1941), p. 4.

[3] H.L.Mencken, quoted in Alan Brinkey, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p. 73.

[4] Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, "Form and Genre in Rhetorical Criticism," *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, 2nd ed., ed. Carl R. Burcghardt (State College, PA: Strata, 2000), p. 442.

[5] Fromm, p. 12. The study of the "productive force" of these forms, the second task of social psychology Fromm identifies, will be discussed in the last three chapters. The "productive force," or function of anti-intellectualism as style, is our principal concern. However, the anti-intellectual style must not be divorced from an understanding of the context in which it operates, from a consideration of the audience that finds it appealing.

[6] Brinkley, p. 198.

[7] For an explanation of this lower middle-class resistance, see Ralf Dahrendorf's case study of Germany in *Society and Democracy in Germany* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1967).

[8] Brinkley, p. 196. See also Seymour Martin Lipset's assessment of Coughlin's audience in "Three Decades of the Radical Right: Coughlinites, McCarthyites, and Birchers," *The Radical Right: The New American Right*, ed. Daniel Bell (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1963), pp. 374-377, pp. 380-391. Though Lipset's analysis of Coughlin's audience largely focuses on his career after the 1936 election, his insights are valuable to understanding the mindset of the demographic the radio priest wielded the most control over.

[9] David H. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression: American Radicals and the Union Party, 1932-1936* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), pp. 60-1.

[10] See Reinhold Niebuhr, "Pawns for Fascism—Our Lower Middle Classes," *American Scholar* VI, No. 2 (Spring, 1937), pp. 145-49.

[11] V.O. Key, quoted in Brinkley, p. 16.

[12] Louis B. Ward, *Father Charles E. Coughlin: An Authorized Autobiography* (Detroit, MI: Tower Publications, 1933), p. 25.

[13] Brinkley, p. 83. Coughlin's syndicated radio show reached listeners in St. Louis, Cincinnati, New York, Boston, Chicago, and Baltimore.

[14] Ibid.

[15] For a solid recounting of the evolution of Coughlin's radio sermons, see Susan Zickmund, "The Shepherd of the Discontented: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Discourse of Father Charles E. Coughlin" (Unpublished dissertation, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1993).

[16] Raymond Gram Swing accused Johnson's speech as "perform[ing] the miracle of combining an excommunication with a public wedding." Swing, "The Build-up of Long and Coughlin," *Nation* 140 (March 20, 1935), p. 325.

[17] A good example of such comparisons by the press can be found in the article, "Gentile Silver," *Nation* 138 (1934), p. 522.

[18] Brinkley, p. 177.

[19] Ibid., pp. 210-211. Long and Coughlin would sometimes talk about each other, but despite aligning themselves similarly on so many issues and sharing similar, if not at times the same, audience, neither "was willing to consider sharing the authority and adulation that he was enjoying as leader of his own movement; neither was willing to contemplate the possibility of being overshadowed by the other."

[20] Ibid., p. 143.

[21] See Richard H. Pells, *Radical Visions and American Dreams: Culture and Social Thought in the Depression Years* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

[22] Fromm, p. 65.

[23] Ibid., p. 124.

[24] Brinkley, p. 76.

[25] Coughlin, in "Reply to General Hugh Johnson," in Zickmund, p. 205.

[26] David M. Kennedy, *Freedom from Fear: The American People in Depression and War,1929-1945* (new York: Oxford, 1999), pp. 234-235.

[27] John D. Hicks, *The Populist Revolt: A History of the Farmer's Alliance and the People's Party* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 406.

[28] Richard Hofstadter, *The Age of Reform: From Bryan to FDR* (New York: Vintage, 1955), p. 35.

[29] It should be noted that in the South this psychological need corresponded with the emergence of Jim Crow laws.

[30] Hofstadter (1955), p. 21.

[31] Ibid., p. 5.

[32] See the reviews of Alan Brinkley, "Richard Hofstadter's *The Age of Reform*: A Reconsideration," *Journal of American History Reviews* 13 (1985), pp. 462-480, and Robert M. Collins, "The Originality Trap: Richard Hofstadter on Populism," *Journal of American History* 76, 1 (June 1989), pp. 150-167.

[33] Fromm, p. 65.

[34] William Ivy Hair, *The Kingfish and His Realm: The Life and Times of Huey P. Long* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), p. 17.

[35] T. Harry Williams, *Huey Long* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 44.

[36] Donald Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), p. 8, p. 11.

[37] For a thorough explanation and discussion of Coughlin's amalgamation of Catholic social justice doctrine and American Populism, see Michael Kazin, *The Populist Persuasion: An American History*, rev. ed. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), pp. 109-134. See also Brinkley, p. 87.

[38] Brinkley, pp. 160-61.

[39] Ibid., p. 161. See Gordon S. Wood's analysis of the class dimensions and radicalism involved in the American Revolutionary War in *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1991).

[40] Ibid.

[41] Robert Stephen Iltis, "Beyond Devil Tokens: The Style of Huey P. Long" (Unpublished Dissertation, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1989), pp. 185-193. To Iltis, Long's rhetoric moved beyond the mere devil tokens Long so often used to explain the evils affecting the American economy. Instead, Long spoke of greed and other sins as bearing the agency of the situation, not the individual industrialists, financial tycoons, and politicians.

[42] Charles J. Tull, *Father Coughlin and the New Deal* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1965), p. 246.

[43] Warren, p. 65. Long was often frequently compared to Bryan. Henry M. Christman's sympathetic collection of Long's papers opens with a preface in which Christman compares Long to Bryan: "In certain key respects, Long was an updated William Jennings Bryan. … Like Bryan, Long was an agrarian Populist; like Bryan, he was a charismatic, mesmerizing orator; and, like Bryan, he constantly invoked the Bible." See Christman, *Kingfish to America: Share Our Wealth, Selected Senatorial Papers of Huey P. Long* (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), p. ix.

[44] Ibid., p. 164.

[45] Bennett, p. 44.

[46] Liah Greenfeld, quoted in Peter O'Brien, *Fragile Ego: Europe's Relation with Islam and America*, (Unpublished Manuscript), p. 153.

[47] See Lawrence Goodwyn's *Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

[48] Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943), p. 342.

[49] Robert C. McMath, Jr., *American Populism: A Social History, 1877*-1898, ed. Eric Foner (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), p. 17.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Tom Amlie, quoted in Brinkley, p. 230.

[52] Ibid., p. 232.

[53] Brinkley, p. 166.

[54] Swing (1935), pp. 16-20. For Swing, "Fascism, then, begins as a radical movement. If one wishes to find evidence of growing fascism in America, one must look first among radical movements, compare their demagogues and their doctrines with the demagogues and the doctrines in pre-fascist Europe (p. 16)." For Swing, Long and Coughlin were close parallels to Hitler and Mussolini. If either man could muster the strength to steal popular support from Roosevelt and merge the power of financial capitalism with their mass following, a brand of American fascism would easily be the result.

[55] Warren, p. 75.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Williams, p. 760.

[58] Hair, p. 270.

[59] Ibid., p. 269. See also Brinkley, p. 180.

[60] Iltis, p. 82.

[61] Charles J. Stewart, Craig Allen Smith, and Robert E. Denton, Jr., *Persuasion and Social Movements*, Fourth Edition (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 2001), p. 241. Stewart, Smith, and Denton postulate that the seven-spoke wheel of Clinton Rossiter's political spectrum—conservatism, standpattism, reaction, revolutionary reaction, revolutionary radicalism, radicalism, and liberalism—also delineate seven typologies of political argument. These seven corresponding typologies are retentive, reversive, restorative, revolutionary, insurgent, innovative, and progressive. The restoration argument Stewart, Smith, and Denton characterize here is typical of reactionary movements like that of Depression Populism.

[62] Swing (1935), p. 30.

[63] Fromm, p. 132.

[64] Julian Green, quoted in Fromm, pp. 132-33.

[65] Fromm, pp. 17-20. Fromm uses the term "moral aloneness" to describe the individual's response to negative freedom. There is "a need to be related to the world outside oneself, the need to avoid aloneness. . . . This lack of relatedness to values, symbols, patterns, we may call moral aloneness and state that moral aloneness is as intolerable as physical aloneness. . . ." Fromm says moral aloneness is also characterized by a "subjective self-consciousness, of the faculty of thinking that man is aware of himself as an individual entity, different from nature and other people." According to Fromm, "by being aware of himself as distinct from nature and other people, by being aware—even very dimly—of death, sickness, aging, he necessarily feels his insignificance and smallness in comparison with the universe and all others who are not 'he.' Unless he belonged somewhere, unless his life had some meaning and direction, he would feel like a particle of dust and be overcome by his individual insignificance."

[66] Hofstadter (1963), p. 154.

[67] Such forces are well-illustrated in the analogies of the chain and department store. As Brinkley writes of Long and Coughlin, both "railed against the decline of the local merchant" at the hands of the chain-store (Brinkley, p. 148). In this way, the chain-store became a symbol of the faceless capitalism Long and Coughlin protested, as the department store did for Hitler (Fromm, p. 218).

[68] Charles Coughlin, quoted in Brinkley, pp. 148-9.

[69] Ibid., pp. 154-155.

[70] Bennett, p. 4.

[71] Ibid.

[72] Dewey, quoted in Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (New York: Vintage, 1963), p. 45.

[73] Hofstadter (1963), p. 45.

[74] Hitler's targeting of the intellectual and the so-called Frankfurt School is a wonderful example of this historical truism.

[75] Coughlin, "Father Coughlin's Preamble and Principles of the National Union for Social Justice," in Brinkley (Appendix III), p. 288.

[76] Kenneth Burke, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle," *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, Second Edition, ed. Carl R. Burgchardt (State College, PA: Strata, 2000), p. 214.

[77] Fromm, p. 154.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Bennett, p. 61. Bennett is speaking of Coughlin, and his quote comes from Max Weber's writings on charismatic authority.

[80] Iltis, p. 121.

[81]Robert S. McElvaine, *Down and Out in the Great Depression* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1983), pp. 8-12.

[82] Burke, p. 214.

[83] Thomas Jefferson, quoted in Hofstadter (1963), p. 154.

[84] Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 301-304.

[85] Billy Sunday, quoted in Hofstadter (1963), p. 119.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Swing (1935), p. 88.

[88] Ibid., pp. 88-9.

[89] Hofstadter (1963), pp. 24-25.

[90] Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), p. iv.

[91] Stephen Lucas, "The Renaissance of American Public Address: Text and Context in Rhetorical Criticism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 75, 2 (May 1998), p. 248.

[92] Michael Leff, "Textual Criticism: The Legacy of G.P. Mohrmann," *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, Second Edition., ed. Carl R. Burgchardt (State College, PA: Strata, 2000), p. 550.

[93] Ibid.

CHAPTER 3
THE KINGFISH & "EVERY MAN A KING"

Huey Long is the mirror of both the weakness and the strength of American democracy. He represented the chaos and childishness of its thought, but also the power of aroused might.[1]
--Carleton Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long*

Raymond Gram Swing, an accomplished journalist, had interviewed Hitler and Mussolini prior to meeting Long. Upon interviewing him, Swing described the senior senator from Louisiana as "the embodiment of the appetite for power."[2] Long advanced quickly in politics, and his search for and ability to gain power in Louisiana put him in the office of railroad commissioner in 1918. After spending six years positioning himself in Louisiana fragmented, one-party politics, Long ran for governor in 1924 in a three-way race and lost. He immediately commenced an organizing for the 1928 race. Four years later, he won the governor's seat and began referring to himself as the Kingfish, the nickname apparently derived from a blackface character from the popular radio serial "Amos 'n' Andy."[3] The Kingfish had no intention of halting his political ambitions upon capturing the governor's mansion. After defending himself from impeachment in 1929 on charges of abusing his office, Long soon launched a race for the United States Senate. He captured a place in national politics when he won Louisiana's Senate primary in September 1930. Not taking his Senate seat until January 1932, Long waited so he could install a puppet governor to maintain his power in the state. From his position in the Senate, Long launched the Share Our Wealth Society and, using many of the same strategies by which he secured power in Louisiana, stormed national politics to secure a large enough following to make him a threat to President Roosevelt in the 1936 election. The Kingfish was not to be trifled with.

Throughout his career, Long's abilities to identify strongly with his political followers and stir up passions strong enough to get them out to vote were always at the heart of his

political power. Centered more on rhetoric and less on policymaking, Long's political career is one of appealing to key constituencies, securing their vote, and maintaining their loyalty while climbing from office to office. The Kingfish's ascension up the political ladder was pushed by his populist politics and the fact that he was an electoral force to be reckoned with. While this was true from his early career in Louisiana, upon entering the national political scene it became widely thought that Long could use the same strategies that elected him governor of Louisiana to elect him President of the United States. Considering Long's famous February 1934 "Every Man a King" address, I will analyze the Kingfish's ability to attract large followings from a uniquely rhetorical perspective. Announcing the creation of the Share Our Wealth Society, "Every Man a King" marks a pivotal point in Long's career. A rhetorical watershed, it was with this address that Long would make most public his disgust with Roosevelt and his intention to function outside party politics.

Largely deliberative and intended to expand Long's audience and strengthen his message that it was a concentration of wealth and an entrenched "plutocracy" that was destroying America, "Every Man a King" must be considered within the larger context of Long's political career. Once demonstrating how "Every Man a King" fits within the Kingfish's national ambitions, I will then perform a close-textual analysis of the address that approaches the discourse as comprised of numerous integrated rhetorical forms organized into a united functioning whole. Concluding this analysis, I will remark on the anti-intellectual style found in "Every Man a King." It is at this point that I will identify the political function the anti-intellectual style works to accomplish.

The Rising Threat of Huey P. Long, Candidate of the People

It is likely that Long had presidential ambitions from a point early in his career. In February of 1930, after dining with former President Coolidge, Long suggested to a reporter a caption for a photograph taken of the two of them: "The ex-president of the United States, and the future one."[4] By the time of his assassination in 1936, it was clear that the Roosevelt Administration considered him a serious political threat. Indeed, it has been commonly acknowledged that it was Long and worries over the 1936 election that prompted Roosevelt to make his quick famous turn to the left in 1935. Indeed, one Democratic senator in 1935 told the *New York Times*, "We are obliged to propose and accept many things in the New Deal that otherwise we would not because we must prevent a union of discontent around [Long]."[5] His challenge of Roosevelt was in turn the driving force behind the Second New Deal. Knowing populist politics and ideology well, Long was familiar with how to appeal to Louisiana's working town folk and farmers who had long been neglected by the dominant established politics of the Old Regulars. Starting his career outside Louisiana's ruling political class, Long became adept at pulverizing the status quo and thinking outside of the traditional political norms of Louisiana's political elite. This quality did not leave him when he entered national politics, and indeed, it played a large part in catapulting him onto the national stage.

The Kingfish in Louisiana

As noted in the last chapter, Long's brand of politics and ideology paralleled that of many of the old Populists he grew up with in the red mud hills and pine forests of Louisiana. He often borrowed Populist terminology, such as his resurrection and prolific use of the word "plutocrat" and frequent use of it.[6] Long also refashioned Populist slogans, as he did most famously with "Every Man a King," Bryan's 1900 campaign slogan.[7] In addition, the stridency of his Populist

message and his aggressive politicking might well be a result of the violent nature of historically aristocratic Louisiana's age-old response to Populism. As V.O. Key noted in his study of Southern Populism, the state's "Populism was repressed with a violence unparalleled in the South,"[8] perhaps explaining the Kingfish's (as Long was often famously known) political aggressiveness and confrontational political style. Reflecting his ties to Louisiana's Populist tradition, upon winning the Louisiana gubernatorial race in 1928 Long's electoral success matched almost perfectly the success of the Populist-Republican ticket of John Pharr in the 1896 gubernatorial race, the new governor winning almost the exact same districts by very similar margins by the use of very similar strategies.[9]

A product of Winn Parish, he would start his political career there after attaining a law degree from Tulane. Long made his first significant set of political waves when he protested Louisiana's Employers' Liability Act, a workmen's compensation law passed by the Louisiana General Assembly in 1914. The Act had angered a number of trial lawyers who naturally saw their profits cut. Initiating a full-scale attack in 1916 against the Liability Act, Long delivered stump speeches across Louisiana and authored a number of broadsides to be distributed throughout the state. During this campaign, argues Robert Iltis, "His early argument and style prefigured his later political rhetoric. In these early discourses, Long both played at provoking class conflict and argued for conventional political change."[10] After winning a number of fairly high-profile trials in compensation cases, at twenty-five he ran for railroad commissioner in 1918, the only state office which did not have a minimum age requirement for election.

As railroad commissioner, Long's political dynamism showed itself most brightly when he turned on Governor John M. Parker, whose election he had helped secure in 1920. Considering Parker to be "a sellout on the issue of taxation,"[11] Long soon became disenchanted

with Parker and his unwillingness to strongly take on Standard Oil and other oil and gas companies in Louisiana that for years had managed to pay little in severance taxes. Denouncing Parker, Long accused the governor of being a slave to corporate interests and a traitor to the people. Parker tried to mobilize the Louisiana General Assembly to impeach Long in 1921, "winning valuable publicity for Long and drawing attention to Parker's failure to deal effectively with the corporations."[12] Long used this publicity to run for governor in 1924. Though he finished third, Long won a surprising thirty-one percent of the vote, just ten points below the Old Regular winner.[13]

Running again in 1928, Long accomplished an overwhelming victory. He won the parishes in the north of Louisiana that he had taken in 1924 and also won the majority of Cajun parishes.[14] Most notably, he united Louisiana's Protestant north and Catholic south despite past political cleavages between the two groups. This was largely accomplished through his class-based campaign. With Long, economics became a more important voting factor than religion. Clearly Long could appeal to large numbers of voters and actually get them out to vote. As a result, his political confidence grew, and Louisiana's Old Guard elite in turn became even more wary of his dominating authority. During his years as governor, Long, ever the class warrior, pushed for high severance taxes, tackled big business, built roads, bridges, and schools, and largely worked to build the kind of infrastructure V.O. Key had attributed to Louisiana's political retardation. His emphasis on the end rather than the means often put him at odds with Louisiana's Constitution. Pushing much of this progressive legislation through Louisiana's bicameral legislature, Long often walked uninvited into legislative meetings. In one instance, Long was confronted by a political opponent who waved a copy of the Louisiana constitution at the Kingfish and proclaimed Long's actions to be unconstitutional. Long simply declared, "I'm

the constitution around here now."[15] To a certain extent, he was. In early 1929, just a few months into his term, came the breaking point.

Trying to pass a very large refinery tax that pitted the huge force of Standard Oil and the Old Regulars against him, Long almost met his political end. On April 27, 1929, nearly six months before Black Tuesday, Long was summoned to appear before the state senate to answer eight charges of impeachment that had been brought against him by a majority vote in the House. The senate required a two-thirds majority to convict Long. Though most senators were known to oppose the controlling forces of the governor, he needed only fourteen of thirty-nine senators to defeat the charges.[16] At the same time, many of Louisiana's powerful opinion leaders turned on Long as well. The state's major newspapers, which had largely endorsed him after his inauguration, now supported his impeachment.[17] Nevertheless, with the political skill that defined him, Long managed to get fifteen senators to sign a "round robin" before the final vote. Pledging their support for the governor in return for patronage, the round robin effectively ended the impeachment campaign. The round robin secured Long's dominance in Louisiana politics until his assassination.[18] He faced impeachment twice and survived both times, each time coming out stronger than before.

Reaching Outside Louisiana

After solidly defeating the Old Regulars in 1929, it was clear that Long was in Baton Rouge to stay. He turned his attention to national politics. Long moved to make political inroads across the whole South as the region, still recovering from Reconstruction, faced the increasing hardships of the Great Depression. Positioning himself for a run for the United States Senate against incumbent Joseph Randsell, Long moved to attack the concentration of wealth in the nation as a whole. He began to strengthen his rhetoric against big business and Washington

inefficiency. These attacks would become more intense and more nationally-relevant once his electoral fate was sealed. When the September 9 primary came along, the Kingfish swept the 1930 election and booted out his Old Regular opponent. Then, instead of taking his Senate seat, Long remained in the governor's seat until he could find a replacement to run as a puppet in the 1932 gubernatorial election. When asked about leaving the Senate seat vacant for a year, Long responded that it was vacant anyway with "Old Feather Duster" Randsell in it.[19]

The stock market collapse gradually brought the country into deep depression, and Long's strong and confident voice became a great comfort to many both in and outside Louisiana. His first real emergence outside Louisiana politics occurred when he took on low cotton prices in 1931. Urging cotton farmers across the south not to grow any cotton in 1932, Long's plan was to cause a cotton shortage that would lead to the 1931 crop being more lucrative than what money could be wrought from the 1931 and 1932 crops combined.[20] Though the Cotton Holiday, as it became known, was defeated, it was in many ways a political success for Long. At its defeat, Long claimed the plan was lost because of other state governors' corrupt alliances with big business interests. Taking to the radio often throughout the campaign, Long appeared frequently in newspapers across the South and "show[ed] himself willing to take bold, forceful action to deal with the Depression, in marked contrast to the more timid and conservative Southern leaders."[21] It is likely that Long recognized "his only possible route to the White House was by having the disadvantaged, across the South and then across the nation, recognize him as their champion. His defeats would be their defeats, but he would keep on fighting until the money power was toppled and a better society built."[22]

In January 1932, Long appointed Oscar K. Allen, nicknamed "O.K.," as his successor. Allen subsequently won the Democratic primary that month and Long, his power secure at home,

took his seat in the United States Senate. Despite his new responsibilities, Long was largely absent from the Senate at first, spending a good bit of his time back home in Louisiana still storming into state legislative meetings.[23] However, as Brinkley notes, when the Kingfish did take the Senate floor he proved "shameless in his pursuit of publicity, and so adept at getting it, that he was soon attracting more attention from the press and the galleries than most of the rest of his colleagues combined. Other Senators envied and resented him; some attempted futilely to restrain him; but no one seemed to have any effect."[24]

His legislative platform, upon taking office, was largely based on a redistribution of wealth across the nation. In April 1932, Long came into direct public conflict with Arkansas Senate Minority Leader Joe T. Robinson. Delivering a speech entitled "Our Bloated Plutocracy," Long informed Robinson that he would be resigning his committee assignments and might well run as a Farmer-Laborite or Republican if the Democratic Party did not do something to curb the concentration of wealth that was destroying America. Labeling Robinson part of "the outer guard of Wall Street," Long permanently estranged himself from the soon-to be majority leader (Robinson would rise to this post upon Roosevelt's election).[25]

To further irritate Robinson, prove his vote-getting ability, and draw a national audience, Long campaigned in July 1932 for Hattie Caraway, the widowed wife of former Arkansas Senator Thaddeus Caraway. Mrs. Caraway had taken her husband's seat in November 1931 and had come to form a close relationship with Long after the Kingfish "cultivated Mrs. Caraway and became her friend and adviser."[26] Before the August 9 election, Long's sound trucks blazoned Arkansas as he gave stump speeches across the state. Mrs. Caraway would speak in a very soft-mannered, delicate voice; and Long, as if the principal figure in some circus act, would come out and deliver a speech that would appeal to Arkansas' "predominantly small-farmer economy" and

"arouse into full-fury. . . resentment vaguely felt by the farmers, to weld it, really, into a genuine class protest."[27] At the end of the campaign, Caraway ran away with an election no one had expected her to win before Long entered the picture. Taking the election a whopping forty-seven percent of the vote, Caraway became the first woman elected to a full-term in the Senate.[28] Out of the thirty-one counties Long toured, Caraway won 52.7 percent of the vote compared to the 37.4 percent of the vote she won in counties where the Long machine did not appear.[29] It was as much Long's victory as Caraway's, and it must have terrified members of Robinson's strongly conservative Senate bloc. The Kingfish again seemed to be defying traditional politics by organizing a Senate campaign in another state.

After securing Caraway's re-election, Long returned to Louisiana to campaign for his long loyal friend John Overton throughout the rest of August and September. Campaigning against Senate incumbent Edwin Broussard, Overton was elected as the junior Senator of Louisiana. During the campaign, Broussard, instead of attacking Overton, spent much of his time criticizing the Long dictatorship.[30] Upon securing Overton's victory, Long announced, "I've done all I can for Louisiana, now I want to help the rest of the country!"[31] Helping the rest of the country would soon come to mean allying himself closely, at least ostensibly, with New Yorker Franklin Roosevelt. Long helped win Roosevelt's nomination at the June Democratic National Convention. When Roosevelt's nomination was almost lost after failing to win the necessary number of delegate votes, Long rallied the Southern states for the soon-to-be president. In the process, he was reported as shaking his fist at Mississippi Senator Pat Harrison yelling, "If you break the unit rule, you sonofabitch, I'll go to Louisiana and break you."[32] With Long's help, Roosevelt commandingly won the nomination.

Every Man a King

A staunch supporter of Roosevelt initially, Long soon became "easily the most outspoken member of the Senate, interjecting himself into every debate and often bringing legislative progress to a virtual halt for days and weeks on end."[33] The Kingfish declared that "the president-elect has not only been nominated, has not only been elected, but he has assumed the leadership of this Nation in order that he might carry out the one great necessary decentralization of wealth in America."[34] Assuming this mandate, Long made every effort to impede the lame duck Congress in the winter of 1933. The most notable example of this effort is his protestation of Senator Carter Glass' Bank Bill. Long delayed a vote on the bill in the Senate through a filibuster, essentially defeating the legislation.[35] After introducing three bills to place ceilings on personal incomes, private fortunes, and inheritances, Long made his first national radio broadcast on NBC on March 17, 1933, five days after Roosevelt delivered his first "fireside chat."[36] Long "present[ed] himself as a champion of the common man, working selflessly to help a popular President fulfill his campaign promises."[37] It would be the first of many speeches to follow in which "Huey was in effect placing himself on a level with the President."[38] Gaining national notoriety for his spontaneous antics and Southern charisma, Long was a national figure in congressional politics almost upon entering office. The man who had met the French ambassador just a year before in green pajamas now sat in the United States' highest deliberative body.

After the March address, Long began increasingly to attack portions of New Deal legislation and various Roosevelt appointments, though always claiming to have a good relationship with the president. Relations with Roosevelt soon went awry, however, as dissension between the two popular figures intensified month by month. Upon attempting to

defeat the creation of the National Recovery Administration, it became clear that Roosevelt and Long's alliance was on thin ice.[39] Though Long never publicly denounced the president, afterward Roosevelt cut ties with Long by no longer consulting the senator on the distribution of federal patronage in Louisiana.[40] Long was slow with a precise response. Then, in October 1933, he retaliated with vitriol in a New Orleans press conference: "While you are at it, pay them my further respects up there in Washington. Tell them they can all go to hell."[41]

Compounding the deterioration of his relationship with Roosevelt over the summer and fall of 1933, Long suffered a tremendous embarrassment when he got into a brawl at the Sands Point club in Long Island. Following an incident at a urinal, Long apparently became involved in a bathroom brawl. With reporters present at the party, the brawl resulted in a number of photographs taken of the drunken senator with a black-eye. The photographs ran across the country. Indeed, the incident became so well-known that it appeared two years later in the Lynds' famous sociological study of Middletown, Indiana: "Huey Long did not have as good a standing in Middletown as Father Coughlin. . . . People here dislike him morally, and they hold against him that rowdy fist-fight down at the Sands Point Casino on Long Island."[42] To make matters worse, it also appeared that he was losing control of his own political machine in Louisiana. The Old Regulars saw an opportunity to strike at Long in the late months of 1933; and in January 1934 the Long-supported candidate lost in the New Orleans mayoral race.

Yet, Long and his machine rebounded. His political capital hurt by both affairs, the Kingfish labored hard to clean up his image as a drunk and a philanderer. In October 1933, the public-relations campaign was off to a good start when Long published his self-laudatory autobiography, *Every Man a King*. The book depicted Long as "sincere and selfless," "directed toward aiding the common people of America."[43] In addition, he restarted publication of his

propagandist newsletter. Demonstrating his national political ambitions, the newsletter was renamed the *American Progress* instead of just the *Louisiana Progress*.

Moving once again toward the national spotlight, Long managed a tremendous comeback when he announced the creation of the Share Our Wealth Society on February 23, 1934, in his second national broadcast entitled, after his book, "Every Man a King." According to Long biographer T. Harry Williams, the idea was completely Long's and came to him

> at three o'clock one morning in his rooms at the Mayflower Hotel. Excited and wanting someone to discuss it with, he telephoned his secretary (Gerald K. Smith) and another assistant to come over immediately. He explained his plan to them and then sat down and sketched on sheets of yellow foolscap paper the whole design of the society—its name, motto, structure, and the principles it would advocate.[44]

Breaking with Roosevelt in October of the year before, the creation of the Share Our Wealth Society was "the decisive signal that Long was not merely attempting to pressure and cajole the Administration and the Democratic Party, but was planning to supplant it."[45] The "Every Man a King" address and its announcement of the Share Our Wealth Society reenergized the Long organization both in Louisiana and across the nation. It also organized Longites from Louisiana to Georgia to Pennsylvania into a united political movement and afforded the senator an opportunity to intensify arguments that it was a concentration of wealth in America that had brought about the Depression. Long's claims that the Roosevelt Administration was merely aggravating the depression in making numerous backdoor deals with big business gained him a following that extended beyond the South, beyond mere agrarians. As Long continued to make these claims, his audience reached the West, some parts of the North, and members of the lower middle-classes from agrarian, industrialist, and small professional backgrounds.

The plan called for the confiscation of fortunes that exceeded three or four million dollars and an increase in annual income and inheritance taxes.[46] The government would redistribute this money and redistribute it across the nation so that "Every family would not make less than $2,000 or $3,000 per year."[47] In addition, Share Our Wealth proposals would encourage the redistribution of stock and other goods, provide increased benefits for veterans, shorten the work week to thirty hours, and perhaps create as much as a month's paid vacation for all workers. According to Long, each family would be guaranteed a combined earning of $5,000. Never explaining the financial possibility or economic impact of the plan in any detail, all Long would say is "I am going to have to call in some great minds to help me."[48] Never did Long seem to doubt the feasibility of the plan. The wealthy aristocracy whom the Kingfish had long been saying owned all the wealth would have more than enough money to fund the plan once it was transferred.

"Every Man a King": A Rhetorical Analysis

"Every Man a King" exemplifies well the anti-intellectual style. Arranged into five major sections, the first three of these sections establishes a need argument for the Share Our Wealth plan, developing an argument that consists of two premises and a conclusion. The fourth section presents the remedy Long is proposing. The fifth section crystallizes Long's proposal in terms of his need and remedy and, most importantly, emphasizes what is likely the real intent of his speech: the acquisition of political capital vis-à-vis the people's identification with him as a political savior. Just as anti-intellectual speech is not necessarily deliberative, neither does it follow this five-section arrangement. However, both of the speeches this thesis analyzes are deliberative and do follow this five-section arrangement. This analysis will examine many of the forms utilized in "Every Man a King" in order of their arrangement. As both Black and Leff

discuss, such chronological analysis is performed in an effort to recreate the experience of the audience.[49] I will make observations as I move from section to section.

America In Decay: Social Inequality and the Framers' Intention

Long's address opens with a rhetorical question, a method used throughout the speech to strengthen the audience's sense of agency and cause the auditor to question what they have understood to be the truth so that he may substitute his own version for theirs: "Is that a right of life, when the young children of this country are being reared into a sphere which is more owned by 12 men than it is by 120,000,000 people?"[50] Immediately upon starting, Long phrases his argument in terms of rights, concepts that are easily understood by and resonate with Americans.[51] Throwing in the notion of an equality in which rights originate, Long asks the rhetorical question if the fundamental right to life is being honored when the lives of twelve men is valued higher than the lives of 120,000,000 people. Transitioning from this general contradiction of what seems a fundamental American principle, Long quickly moves to introduce himself as a powerful figure who understands the people and the nature of their simple problems.

In his introduction, Long asserts that he regrets he "will not be able to discuss in detail so much as I can write when I have all the time and space that is allowed for the subjects," thus asserting from the very beginning a forthright honesty and authority on the subjects he will be discussing. Then, moving to identify with his audience in establishing a down-home credibility, he contends, "my friends, that we have no difficult problem to solve in America, and that is the view of nearly everyone with whom I have discussed the matter here in Washington and elsewhere throughout the United States—that we have no very difficult problem to solve." While Long never says to whom it is he has talked, he breaks down the wall between the audience and himself by referring to them as "friends." The effect is that friends do not

rigorously question friends, there being an element of trust in such a relationship. By characterizing his audience as "friends," the Kingfish moves to weaken the questioning capacity of his audience. He is going to "tell it like it is," to illuminate the real problems the country faces as a best friend would do another a favor.

From the beginning, Long asks his audience to accept him into the club of the common man as just another one of the 'good ole boys.' Informing his audience that the problem befalling America is not at all difficult to solve, Long appeals to his audience insomuch as he offers them hope that, though they may not be able to understand their desperate condition, he can. The authoritative tone he takes throughout the rest of the speech is thus set up from its very beginning. Long declares:

> It is not the difficulty of the problem which we have; it is the fact that the rich people of this country—and by the rich people I mean the super-rich—will not allow us to solve the problems, or rather the one little problem that is afflicting this country, because in order to cure all the big fortunes, that we may scatter the wealth to be shared by all the people.

Previewing what will ultimately be his solution, Long then moves to establish the first premise of his need argument.

Establishing a division between the interests of "the super-rich" and ordinary people, the "us" he refers to, Long reinforces this division in his next paragraph:

> *We* (the "us" previously established) have a marvelous love for this Government of *ours*; in fact, it is almost a religion, and it is well that it should be, because *we* have a splendid form of government and *we* have a splendid set of laws. *We* have everything here *we* need, except that *we* have neglected the fundamentals upon which the American Government was principally (*sic*) predicated [Emphases added].

According to Long, the government of the United States characterized as "religion," as "splendid" in its form and in its laws, is under threat. The collective "we" he introduces is also in danger. Using the word "splendid" to complement "religion," Long introduces what will be central metaphor throughout his address. "Splendid" connotes a sense of worth, of something valuable that is built to endure the ages. Yet, here the "splendid form" seems subject to tarnish. Through this metaphor of America as splendid religion, the first premise of the Long's central need argument is introduced. Long tells his audience that our government, our splendid creation and inheritance, has been neglected, that its very foundation is at risk. For Long, "our" government is now in conflict with the interests of the "super-rich," leading Long to his second rhetorical question: "How many of *you* remember the first thing that the Declaration of Independence said?" Long will use the allusion to Declaration of Independence as a representation of America's "splendid form" and put it in marked contrast to the status quo.

Before assessing the reference to the Declaration of Independence, however, it is important to note the effect of Long's incorporation of "you" into the question. Long moves to engage his audience, to put the question in their hands, as rhetorical and controlled as it may be. This is a strategy Long uses throughout the speech so as to give his audience a sense of empowerment. However, it is only a *sense*, an illusion of agency. While the illusion is created that Long's auditors are thinking for themselves and personalizing his message as if it were a simple truth told from friend to friend, the reality is quite different. The Kingfish guides his auditor through his rather simple argument scheme, securing their uncritical agreement with one premise while simultaneously introducing the next. The working of this dynamic will be exemplified in much greater detail in other sections of the speech, though it is important to have it in mind from its beginning.

Shifting from this "you" back to "we," Long introduces the Declaration of Independence, thus enacting the metaphor of America's great past religion: "It said, '*We* hold these truths to be self-evident that there are certain inalienable rights of the people, that there are certain inalienable rights of the people, and among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness'; and it said, further, 'We hold the view that all men are created equal.'" Long then asks, again rhetorically,

> Now what did they mean by that? Did they mean, my friends, to say that all men were created equal and that that meant that any one man was born to inherit $10,000,000,000 and that another child was to inherit nothing? Did that mean, my friends, that someone would come into this world without having had an opportunity, of course, to have hit one lick of work, should be born with more than it and all of its children's children could ever dispose of, but that another would have to be born into a life of starvation?

Boldly calling the state of the nation into question, asserting that it has drifted from the precepts upon which it was originally founded, Long portrays himself as prophet among the people. Delivering a jeremiad calling for America to recover its noble past and drive out the infidels or risk losing its identity, Long passionately argues the inconsistency of what he asserts to be the Declaration of Independence's vision of America and the real America—what the chosen nation has become. He creates a disturbing dissonance and appeals to the discontents of his audience, informing them that life as they know it is not how it was intended to be. After asking jeremiacally the rhetorical question about child starvation, Long asserts, "That was not the meaning of the Declaration of Independence. . . ." In so doing, Long explicitly declares the first premise of his need argument: *The status quo is not in accordance with the meaning of the Declaration of Independence.*

Asking two more rhetorical questions, Long again recites the question he opened with and then introduces a second:

> Is that, my friends, giving them a fair shake of the dice or anything like the inalienable right to life, liberty, or the pursuit of happiness, or anything resembling the fact that all people are created equal; when we have today in America thousands and hundreds of thousands and millions of children on the verge of starvation in a land that is overflowing with too much to eat and too much to wear? I do not think you will contend that, and I do not think for a moment that they will contend it.

Shifting to "you" at the end, Long places, for an instant, the auditor outside the "we" created by the rhetor, a "we" that agrees with the tenets of the Declaration of Independence, with the rule of fair play and freedom and abundance that the framers' envisioned. In this instant, the auditor must make up his or her mind, concluding whether or not the current situation of the United States is indeed in agreement with the meaning of the Declaration. However, the choice before the auditor is not so much the choice it might seem. The auditor can either agree and cede this ground to Long, verifying his prophetic-like credibility, or fall outside the "we" and risk being placed outside the tenets Long uses to identify with his audience. This coercive element of the fear of being cast outside the celebrated group of the common man is a recurring theme in "Every Man a King," and the I-we-you shifts work quite effectively in creating it. To speak even further of the unwillingness of Long to give any control to his audience, he authoritatively declares at the end of his rhetorical question that "this is not the meaning." The Kingfish has already instructed his audience, leaving the auditor to join with him or be cast into the sort of dreaded out-groups that anti-intellectual speech is so adept at creating.

God's Command: Distribution of Wealth

Immediately moving onto the next section of the speech, Long clearly marks his second premise: "Now let *us* see if *we* cannot return this Government to the Declaration of Independence and see if *we* are going to do anything regarding it." Agreeing with the first premise, the audience is affirmed in the "us" and "we" of Long's transition. Typical of Long's speech, the answer is found authoritatively, though posed again in a rhetorical question:

> Why should we hesitate or why should we quarrel with one another to find out what the difficulty is, when we know what the Lord told us what the difficulty is, and Moses wrote it out so a blind man could see it, then Jesus told us all about it, and it was later written in the book of James where everyone could write about it?

Recognizing the need to take this answer slowly, I will consider it in parts. "We" once again used excessively, Long moves his audience from revelation to revelation in a number of dependent clauses with each leading to the next creating a crescendo effect of overwhelming credibility. The auditor experiences a sense of progress as the argument unfolds itself, and Long's comforting control is again experienced.

He offers simple, age-old solutions to what he claims are not complicated economic phenomena. The answer is in what the Lord, Moses, Jesus, and James have told ordinary people. Long bolsters his egalitarian argument in terms of presenting these figures as accessible exemplars for all to follow. The common man and woman can access God equally if they follow such good examples and if they are enabled to act according to them in a fashion Catherine Albanese describes as melodramatic.[52] The common man to whom Long speaks, and in which he includes himself, is but a mass of people living according to the dogmas they adhere to. They are righteous believers oppressed by the wealthy capitalist class. As Jonathan Edwards instructed his New Light Congregationalists, faith is to be lived and enacted. Through a parallel

dynamic, Long encourages people to live and enact faith as he authoritatively describes it through the Lord, Moses, Jesus, and James. Antinomianism thus becomes nothing but a guise for conformity. In true evangelical fashion, Long declares that all have access to the solution as it unfolds itself in the Scripture. Catachresis aside, the conversion of his Christian audience's wisdom is all that is needed as Long recites Scripture:

> I refer to the Scriptures, now, my friends, and give *you* what it says not for the purpose of convincing *you* of the wisdom of myself, not for the purpose ladies and gentlemen, of convincing *you* of the fact that I am quoting the Scripture means that I am to be more believed than someone else; but I quote *you* the Scripture, rather refer *you* to the Scripture because whatever *you* see there may rely upon will never be disproved so long as *you* or *your* children or anyone may live. . . [Emphases added].

Affirming his sincerity, Long's use of "you," as I have before said, again creates the illusion of the audience's agency. Yet, his introduction of Scripture introduces a dogmatic element. The Scriptures are not to be questioned, and Long leaves no room to question his interpretation of them. Instead, he relies on Scripture as a source for his own arguments, rendering the masses unthinking and unable to question the validity of his interpretation or their applicability to the circumstance in which Long is applying them. Using Scripture, Long presents his second premise and the most authoritative of all: *True societies live according to what the Scriptures tells us, and the Scriptures command the distribution of wealth*

Long promulgates as a preacher would, "But the Scripture says, ladies and gentlemen, that no country can survive, or for a country to survive it is necessary that we keep the wealth scattered among the people, that nothing should be held permanently by one person. . . ." Assessing it to be the judgment of the Lord that "we would have to distribute wealth every so

often, in order that there not be people starving to death in a land of plenty," Long shifts back to using "we" and using the phrase, once more, to excess in outlining a number of problems *we*, as Americans, as good common men and women, face. Indeed, Long uses the phrase "We have" to start the next five sentences after his declaration of what he believed the law of the Lord to be in explanation of the many problems America faces before introducing the conclusion of his need argument. The parallel structure works to enforce the authority of his argument and to add to the sense of progress that his jeremiacal prophetic tone creates.

America's Salvation: A Sharing of Wealth

Linking God's command of wealth distribution to a tarnished America, Long explains American society's inconsistency with the vision of the framers' as a result of its inability to live by God's command. Long declares:

> We have trouble, my friends, in the country, because we have too much money owing, the greatest indebtedness that has ever been given to civilization, where it has been shown that we are incapable of distributing to the actual things that are here, because the people have not money enough to supply themselves with them, *and* because the greed of a few men is such that they think it necessary that they own everything, *and* their pleasure consists in the starvation of the masses, *and* in their possessing things they cannot use, *and* their children cannot use, but who bask in the splendor of sunlight and wealth, casting darkness and despair onto everyone else [Emphases added].

Explaining America's "incapability" to exist according to Scripture, Long demonstrates his controlling style in his multiple use of conjunction. Linking multiple clauses together through his use of "and," Long secures the feeling from his audience that "the story is confirmed and inevitable; that there are no contingencies, and everything happens with double assurance of

something foretold."[53] Achieving this effect, Long moves to assert his concluding premise: *America's inability to abide by God's command is the cause of its troubles, and America must redistribute wealth in order to attain its former splendor*.

The shift into this conclusion is again clearly marked with Long's transition, "Now, let us take America today." Discussing the debt Americans owe and the exorbitant interest that only goes to strengthen the position of the already wealthy, Long affirms his position: "I am going to tell you what the wise men of all ages and all times, down even to the present day, have all said: That you must keep the wealth of the country scattered, and you must limit the amount any one man can own." After this reiteration, the Kingfish moves to further divide "we" (Long's supporters up to this point—the ordinary, God-fearing man and woman) from "they" (the wealthy financiers, industrialists, and corrupt politicians). Shifting quickly to "you," Long preaches

> Now, my friends, if you were on an island where there were 100 lunches, you could not let one man eat up the hundred lunches, or take the hundred lunches and not let anybody else eat any of them. If you did, there would not be anything else for the balance of the people to consume. So, we have in America today, my friends, a condition by which about ten men dominate the means of activity in at least 85 percent of the activities that you own. . . . They own the banks, they own the steel mills, they own the railroads, they own the bonds, they own the mortgages, they own the stores, they have chained the country from one end to the other, until there is not any kind of business that a small, independent man could go into today and make a living. . . .

The division between big businessmen and the "small, independent man" is vast. The ordinary man and woman who abides by the Scriptures is righteous. The big businessman who eats all the

lunches is usurious and filled with sin. America's salvation and hope to once more find accord with the natural rights principles of the Declaration of Independence rests in the need for the redistribution of wealth.

Further arguing from authority, Long alludes to Socrates and Plato: "Read what they said. Read what Plato said; that you must not let any one man be too poor, and you must not let any one man be too rich. . . ." Long then remarks about redistribution, "It is a very simple process of mathematics that you do not have to study, and that no one is going to discuss with you." Long's audience does not even need to endeavor to find the answers for themselves. Instead, they have Long. Long continues:

> So that was the view of Socrates and Plato. That was the view of the English statesmen. That was the view of the American statesmen. That was the view of American statesmen like Daniel Webster, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, William Jennings Bryan, and Theodore Roosevelt, and even as late as Herbert Hoover and Franklin D. Roosevelt. Both of these men, Mr. Hoover and Mr. Roosevelt, came out and said there had to be decentralization of wealth, but neither one of them ever did anything about it. But, nevertheless, they recognized the principle. The fact that neither one of them did anything about it is their own problem that I am not undertaking to criticize. . . .

Citing even more authorities and throwing the whole of the American tradition irrefutably behind his argument, Long strengthens the rhetorical effect of his audience in the same way he did in alluding to the Lord, Moses, Jesus, and James. Yet, here he does more than just that. Here he provides two illustrations of men who acknowledged the teachings, but went against them. Long, in typical antinomian fashion, realizes the problem as uniquely the audience's. The

problem is morally grave and caused by the corrupt intellect of Hoover and Roosevelt who have caused Americans to wonder astray from inward moral truths.

The parallel use of "that" again emphasizes the revelatory prophetic authority with which Long speaks. In addition, the fear of being cast into the damned along with Roosevelt and Hoover is illustrative of the coerciveness of the anti-intellectual style. The common man and woman shall inherit the earth by virtue of inner goodness. The man and woman who questions, who criticizes, who dares to remain a "you" might well be damned. Long the prophet knows of salvation, and it is only the morally corrupt who refuse to accept his vision. Utilizing an evangelical technique, Long overwhelms his audience with "evidence" to create a crescendo effect designed to force the submission of his audience to his point of view. Stringing relative clauses together and incorporating numerous conjunctions, he bombards his audience with "reasons" as to why they must support what he is saying if they are to live by the righteousness of tradition that is the pathway to their moral salvation.

The Righteous Shall Prevail: The Share Our Wealth Society

After remarking on the philosophies of Socrates and Plato as great authorities who also supported redistribution and warned societies about the dangers of the accumulation of exorbitant amounts of wealth in the hands of a few, Long moves into the remedy section of his argument after, once more, pitting the common man against the corrupt capitalist. Transitioning to his remedy argument, Long promulgates,

> It is necessary to save the Government of the country, but it is much more necessary to save the people of America. We love this country. We love this government. It is a religion, I say. It is a kind of religion people have read of when women, in the name of religion, would take their infant babies and throw them into the burning flame, where they would instantly be

> devoured by the all-consuming fire, in days gone by; and there probably are some people of the world even today, who, in the name of religion, throw their tear-dimmed eyes into the sad faces if their fathers and mothers, who cannot give them food *and* clothing they both needed, *and* which is necessary to sustain them, *and* that goes on day after day, *and* night after night, when day gets into darkness *and* blackness, knowing these children would arise in the morning without being fed, *and* probably go to bed at night without being fed [Emphases added].

Declaring America "is a religion," Long affirms the metaphor he introduced in the preface of his speech and heightens the salvation-damnation effect. Again employing the repetitive conjunctions, Long pits the religious ordinary man and woman against the conspiring and corrupt man and woman. The Kingfish's audience is by this time even more willing to accept the inevitable reforms of his remedy and are at this point in the speech rendered passive spectators of whatever vision Long will unfold. He is there to comfort, and at this point they will largely accept whatever policy he espouses.

Long announces his solution: to make "every man a king." Long then lays out a number of proposals, all of which employ "we propose" versus "I propose." Long and the audience's thoughts become the same. The rhetor and auditor have become one. In proposing the limiting of fortunes, the guaranteeing of fixed incomes, old-age pensions, veterans benefits, limits on hours of work, and a highly-graduated taxation system, Long employs "we" throughout his various descriptions.

Man of the People: A Political Savior

Securing identification with his audience though his use of colloquialisms, his elevation of common sense, and his stated belief that ordinary religious men are far superior to

complicated corrupt men, Long also secures a powerful place for himself in the psychology of his audience. Kenneth Burke writes, the rhetor who "may have to change an audience's opinion in one respect . . . can succeed only insofar as he yields to that audience's opinions in other respects. Some of their opinions are needed to support the fulcrum by which he would move other opinions."[54] In the case of "Every Man a King," not only does Long yield to his audience's opinions in some respect (identification), he yields to their opinions, and then, dominating their thought process and identifying with them as "friends," moves them to accept his need argument and the remedies he offers as part of the Share Our Wealth Plan. At the conclusion of his speech, Long once again reverts to "I":

> Now, my friends, *I* am going to stop. *I* thank you for this opportunity to talk to you. *I* am having to talk under the auspices and by the grace and permission of the National Broadcasting System tonight, and they are letting me talk free. If *I* had the money, and *I* wish *I* had the money, *I* would like to talk to you more often on this line, but *I* have not got it, and *I* cannot expect these people to give it to me free except on some rare instance. But, my friends, *I* hope that you will get up and help in the work, because the resolution and bills are before Congress, and we hope to have your help in getting together and organizing your Share Our Wealth Society [Emphases added].

Long's shift to using "I," and using it repetitively, serves to elevate his status as a prophet predicting the inevitable and comforting the auditor with his power and grasp of the desperate situation of the Depression. In addition, Long' use of "you" again provides the auditor with some sense of agency as he or she looks to Long as a political savior. However, it is "we" who shall prevail and be saved. All "we" has to do is simply follow the all-encompassing wisdom of the omnipotent "I."

Encouraging the people to join Share Our Wealth societies across the nation, Long tells millions of Americans to "Enroll with us. Let us make known to the people what we are going to do. . . . We have got a little button that some of our friends designed, with our message around the rim of the button, and in the center 'Every man a king.'" The prospect of joining such a group of wise common men was no doubt a great comfort to many of the Depression's most hopeless victims, and Long offered a strong personality with which to identify strongly with and submit to. Although Share Our Wealth was utterly bogus in terms of its feasibility, and though Long never took very seriously the drafting of actual policy to accompany its framework, "Every Man a King" won the Kingfish a devoted following that would stick with him until his assassination in September 1935. It would strike fear into the Roosevelt Administration, and it would catapult a series of criticisms that Long represented a Fascist threat to the United States. Caught in a series of carefully controlled and leading clauses, Long's audience easily became trapped in the need premises of the speech and an over-identification with the rhetor that equated to submission. More than identity politics as usual, Long's followers worshipped him as a demigod that represented not only their interests, but their very being.

The Anti-Intellectual Style as Over-Identification, Possession, and Incapacitation

"Every Man a King" launched Share Our Wealth societies across the nation and was the start to what Swing has characterized as the most successful time in Long's political career.[55] With the speech and the creation of Share Our Wealth societies throughout the country it was clear that Long aimed to work far outside traditional party politics. With "Every Man a King," it was further clear that he would break with the Democratic Party and battled against President Roosevelt in the 1936 election. Indeed, the increasing number of Share Our Wealth societies and massive enrollment in the program throughout 1934 and 1935 "furnished an index to the

Senator's growing political strength. . . ."[56] Long turned administration of Share Our Wealth over to Gerald K. Smith, who H.L. Mencken described as "the gutsiest and goriest, loudest and lustiest, the deadliest and damndest orator ever heard on this or any other earth . . . , the champion boob bumper of all epochs."[57] Under Smith's zealous leadership, the number of societies across the country increased as the "boob bumper" traveled from town to town. All of the Society's activities were run by Long and Smith from Baton Rouge; and though no one was precisely sure what its purpose was, by 1935 it was commonly believed that the Share Our Wealth would support political candidates.[58] Share Our Wealth pamphlets abounded, and by 1935 Share Our Wealth clubs were prominent from the South to Philadelphia to New England, one Newark man declaring that he saw no reason why his town could not have 50,000 members.[59] A great success, "Every Man a King" commenced an enthusiasm that would sweep the nation.

In highlighting its anti-intellectual style, it must understand how the forms Long utilizes throughout the speech function together to accomplish a political effect. In that "Every Man a King" is rhetorical watershed in Long's career as "Messiah of the Rednecks,"[60] the speech exemplifies Long's effort to denigrate intellect and the intellectual by undermining individual agency, pitting thought against morality, subsuming the individual into a groupthink mentality, and revealing reality as a prophet might in opposition to common reason and better judgment. In shifting agency from "you" to "we," Long creates the illusion through rhetorical questions and inclusive pronouns that the audience is in control has an active role in what is being said, though this is not at the case. Indeed, the audience is merely being told what to think and do, and is in fact being downright coerced into agreement for fear of being cast into a group outside of the common man and woman that "Every Man a King" so celebrates.

A number of dichotomies are used to facilitate this fear of alienation. The moral man and woman who suffers and toils is lauded for his or her moral endurance and earthly suffering. However, always rendered passive, they are not celebrated for their potential to think and act independently. The immoral man and woman thinks and acts independently for his or her own good, and to do so might well risk the auditor being perceived as belonging to this immoral class rather than the righteous class of which Long speaks. The Kingfish's frequent and deft use of division, contrasting a good and Heaven-bound "we" to an evil and damned "they," heightens the impact of these moral-immoral, good-evil, moral-intellectual dichotomies. While those not included in the category of the common man and woman are held to be a cause of Depression woes, those who place themselves in the in-group receive the benefit of being cleansed of their own failure to succeed.

To compound this effect, Long's constant use of a prophetic and revelatory tone gives the discourse a sense of inevitability that renders its arguments beyond question and makes spectators out of the audience. The evangelical crescendo effect created à la his use of relative clauses and repetitive conjunction overwhelms his audience into accepting his message. Still passive, Long's moral sufferers easily fall victim to the misperception that they will be saved if they embrace the Kingfish's inevitable vision of Share Our Wealth and elevate him as their leader. Instead of judging the merit of Long's arguments and his application of the frequent authorities he cites, the audience is instead caught in a spell in which the confident and superior Long tells the people what their problem is and offers them a solution. As if received on high, the Share Our Wealth Society seems designed to save the chosen people of America from what would otherwise be a gloomy fate. Long offers Americans an opportunity to restore their city on a hill.

Most of all, and as the cumulative effect of all these various functions, "Every Man a King" secures for Long an over-identification of the audience with the rhetor by which Long is able to subsume his audience as they strive to surrender their freedom to his superior strength and skill. As Swing writes of Long,

> His is a mastering as well as masterful mind, which goes far to explain the unstinting admiration of his followers. They are used to his bad manners, they forgive the ruthlessness of his political methods, they condone the corruption of his regime, they overlook his innumerable impetuous blunders, because the man has the gift of an amazing, almost baffling mental ability. He towers over them, he out-smarts them, he knows. He is the hill-billy come to power, with the crudity of the hill-billy and his native shrewdness multiplied tenfold. Hill-billies have been the underdogs of the South; now through Huey Long they are supreme in Louisiana.[61]

Long, provincial yet intelligent, is driven by a common sense intelligence that is more efficient than intellect. He enacts his own argument as to the virtue of the common man and woman, standing before them as the manifestation of all their hopes and aspirations. His followers, long shut out of the political system, may vicariously exercise power through his will. The Kingfish gives his audience something and someone to believe in, and he comforts them insofar as he provides them with an example of what they might achieve and a set of scapegoats on which to blame their troubles. One critic once acknowledged of Long "his ability to comport himself 'like a politician who is all things to all men. He weeps with the afflicted, jests with the jolly, storms with the vindictive, argues gravely with the mentally alert.'"[62] Yet, none of these actions is necessarily sincere. All are roles Long plays to secure power through achieving a 'oneness'

with his audience by which he may subsume the entirety of their being. The "we" Long generates and constantly employs is the foundation of his demagogy.

Manipulating the fear of being grouped outside the "we" he creates, Long secures a position of power for himself over his audience. He has them surrender their freedom and gain instead "a new security and a new pride in the participation of power in which one submerges."[63] Though his audience might be under the illusion that power is still theirs and is only being exercised through the figure of Long, the fact of the matter is instead quite different. Long, making every effort to identify with his audience and being successful in so doing, uses this identification not just as a fulcrum by which to sway their thoughts, but rather as a device by which to take their being. He possesses them. Once under his spell, their very identity so entangled with his that they cannot resist, their intellect is incapacitated and they are left merely to execute with all the efficiency of intelligence what their leader deems to be righteous, moral, and appropriate. Ironically, without intellect, they lose all sense of morality. Thus is the function of the anti-intellectual style.

NOTES

[1] Carleton Beals, *The Story of Huey P. Long* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1935), p. 25.

[2] Raymond Gram Swing, quoted in William Ivy Hair, *The Kingfish and His Realm: The Life and Times of Huey P. Long* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), p. 279.

[3] Hair, p. 173.

[4] Ibid., p. 192.

[5] *New York Times* (January 10, 1935), quoted in Alan Brinkey, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p. 97.

[6] Hair, p. 120.

[7] David H. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression: American Radicals and the Union Party, 1932-1936* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), p. 124.

[8] V.O. Key, *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 160.

[9] Brinkley, p. 22.

[10] Robert Stephen Iltis, "Beyond Devil Tokens: The Style of Huey P. Long" (Unpublished Dissertation, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1989), pp. 49-50.

[11] Hair, p. 102.

[12] Brinkley, p. 18.

[13] Ibid., p. 19.

[14] Hair, p. 159.

[15] Ibid., p. 163.

[16] Ibid., p. 185.

[17] Adolph O. Goldsmith, "A Study of the Objectivity of Treatment of Governor Huey P. Long by Six Louisiana Daily Newspapers During Long's First Eleven Months in Office" (Unpublished Dissertation, University of Iowa, 1967), p. 136.

[18] Hair, p. 186.

[19] Ibid., p. 203.

[20] Ibid., p. 214.

[21] Brinkley, p. 39.

[22] Hair, p. 217.

[23] Brinkley, p. 42.
[24] Ibid.
[25] Hair, p. 235.
[26] T. Harry Williams, *Huey Long* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 584.
[27] Ibid., p. 592, p. 593.
[28] Brinkley, p. 52.
[29] Ibid., p. 53.
[30] Hair, p. 249.
[31] Ibid., p. 253.
[32] Williams, p. 581. Williams writes, "If the Kingfish had not held the Southern states for Roosevelt, the result could well have been different, as a few Roosevelt supporters were ready to concede."
[33] Brinkley, p. 54.
[34] Long quoted in Brinkley, p. 54.
[35] Williams, pp. 623-4.
[36] Brinkley, pp. 61-62.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Williams, p. 629.
[39] Ibid., pp. 635-639.
[40] Brinkley, p. 63.
[41] Long, quoted in Brinkley, p. 63.
[42] Robert S. and Helen M. Lynd, quoted in Ernest Gordon Bormann, "A Rhetorical Analysis of the National Radio Broadcasts of Huey P. Long," (Unpublished Dissertation: State University of Iowa, 1953), p. 54.
[43] Brinkley, 70. See also Hair, pp. 259-260.
[44] Williams, pp. 692-3.
[45] Brinkley, p. 79.
[46] Hair, pp. 270-1.
[47] Long, quoted in Hair, p. 270.
[48] Hair, p. 270.
[49] Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), pp. 42- 60. Black writes that re-creative criticism must break from the neo-Aristotelian model and that the critic must instead seek to analyze speeches as they engage the critic. Criticism should be a response to a discourse as it unravels itself. In experiencing the speech as it unfolds itself, the critic may discover a variety of rhetorical techniques that "will almost always stand as a live possibility at any point in history (p. 57).
[50] Huey Long, "Every Man a King (February 23, 1934)," can be accessed online through "Top 100 Speeches," *American Rhetoric* (http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/hueyplongking.htm).
[51] This is a common enough finding. See Michael Zuckert's *Natural Rights Republic: Studies in the Foundation of the American Political Tradition*, rev. ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1996). For a contemporary study of American rights-based discourse, see Mary Ann Glendon's highly-provocative study, *Rights Talk: The Impoverishment of Political Discourse* (New York: The Free Press, 1991).
[52] Catherine Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion* (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1981), p. 439. Albanese claims that "Like the Puritans, later Americans were a melodramatic people." The progressive feel of Long's speech is almost as if a moral vision is unfolding itself, and the idea that a moral order can be established that reflects individuals acting in accordance with the tenets of the Lord, Moses, Christ, James, etc., reflects the postmillenarian melodrama of so doing.
[53] Richard Weaver, *Ethics of Rhetoric* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), p. 137. Weaver's example of this effect is the use of "and" in the King James version of the Bible.
[54] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), p. 58.
[55] Swing, *Forerunners of American Fascism* (Freeport, NY: Book for Libraries Press, 1935), p. 94.

[56] Bormann, p. 61.
[57] Brinkley, p. 173.
[58] Ibid., p. 174.
[59] Ibid., p. 204.
[60] Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Age of Roosevelt: The Politics of Upheaval* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1963).
[61] Swing (1935), pp. 87-88.
[62] Norman McGiffin, quoted in Iltis, p. 35.
[63] Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1941), p. 154.

CHAPTER 4
THE WARRIOR PRIEST & HIS SIXTEEN PRINCIPLES

. . . He is stirring up the animals, and that has got to be done by someone. The masses are sluggish-minded and have not shown any faint signs of rebellion until recently. The recovery program opposed by the moneyed interests cannot be carried through on an intellectual plane alone. The masses must be enlisted to fight for it before you can put it over. Father Coughlin is arranging that kind of thing to a considerable extent, and in doing so is a useful citizen.[1]
--John Ryan, *The New York Times*, December 5, 1933

Though Catholic University theology professor and social justice activist John Ryan would first see Father Coughlin as a useful tool in promoting the New Deal and other reform measures most liberal Catholics supported, he would later reverse himself and denounce Coughlin as full of "ugly, cowardly, and flagrant calumnies."[2] Ryan was not alone among those who supported Coughlin in his early years only to denounce him when his cause ran contrary to their own. It seemed that Ryan was comfortable with Coughlin's anti-intellectual speech insofar as it worked to accomplish his own political agenda. However, when Coughlin changed his position to attack President Roosevelt in early 1935, Ryan changed his mind.

In order not to commit such hypocrisy, Father Coughlin's speech must be recognized for what it inherently is regardless of its alignment with any one political agenda. As best as one can tell from reading Ryan's characterization of Coughlin, Ryan knew exactly how Coughlin's speech functioned and was fully aware of its power. Yet, he did not denounce it. Though more joined Ryan's position, especially after the failure of the Union Party in the 1936 election, Coughlin's rise on the radio is partly explained by those who tolerated his Sunday radio sermons despite their increasing demagogy. Indeed, many such as Ryan, and perhaps even Roosevelt in the early stages of his presidency, regarded Coughlin and his audience as valuable political tools. It was only when Coughlin's vitriol against Roosevelt became too much for many people to

swallow that many began to denounce the radio priest; and by then his power and the fanaticism of many of his followers had swelled to make Coughlin an increasing threat to democracy.

Coughlin's discourse, like Huey Long's, dominated the public sphere of the 1930s and, as has been noted, received more mail than any other man in America. His program garnered as many as forty-five million listeners.[3] From his Sunday radio sermon's start in 1926, Coughlin's audience grew as his themes became more secularized, more political, and more retaliatory against the wealthy classes and corrupt Washington politicians. Coughlin conjured up the preexisting resentment felt by the lower middle-class. Like Long, he managed to direct that resentment against whatever or whomever he deemed the enemy to be, whether communism, the concentration of wealth, the monetary system, President Roosevelt, or, as he targeted later in his career, the Jewish people. After obtaining a radio following across the Midwest that penetrated sections of the Atlantic seaboard, Coughlin began to speak increasingly about the Depression as a result of greed and the failure of American society to structure its economic system according to what he considered to be God's will. The number of radio stations where he could be heard and the number of listeners he attracted increased as he talked more about these issues traditionally held to be outside the domain of a priest's expertise.

Coughlin used the radio as a device by which to console Depression-suffering Americans long before Roosevelt took to the air in March 1933. Aligning himself first with Roosevelt, Coughlin drifted slowly away from the President (more slowly than Long) until the radio priest began to criticize the Administration in 1934. The break with Roosevelt was never really complete until 1935, however. In November 1934 Coughlin delivered his speech introducing the National Union for Social Justice and its Sixteen Principles of Justice.

Like “Every Man a King,” “The National Union for Social Justice” is a deliberative speech that exemplifies the anti-intellectual style. Similar to Long, Coughlin’s announcement of his own organization is comprised of a need-remedy argument. The need is identified in Coughlin’s description of a deteriorating America; the remedy, like Long’s, is the good that might come from the proposals from and membership allegiance to a created organization. While Coughlin’s group was not organized as well as Long’s Share Our Wealth Society, it did attract many members from among the same audience Long targeted. The intent of the organization was also unclear, as Coughlin became “even more frenetic, as if he were competing with the man in the White House whom he sought to impress, to counsel, and perhaps, in his more arrogant moods, to control. Failing all of this, he struck out on his own and formed his own organization in. . . the National Union for Social Justice.”[4]

The National Union eventually worked to support political candidates, and it was clear that it would likely become a third-party ticket in 1936 or merge with other organizations in so doing. Like Share Our Wealth, the National Union worried the Roosevelt Administration and the numerous critics who largely regarded the organization as a creeping Fascist threat. The Nazi Party had started out slow and whacky, and the National Union could become a similar threat to democracy in America. Later, in 1938, long after his power had declined, Coughlin told listeners that his political purpose was to transform the United States into a corporate state resembling Fascist Italy. Though he denounced totalitarianism, racism, and class hatred, Coughlin wished for “a single national religion, recognized by the state.”[5] Condemning totalitarianism, racism, and class hatred, Coughlin indeed would indeed propagate all three at some time in his career.

The Radio Priest's Rise to Power: Coughlin and His Flock

Born a Canadian in Hamilton, Ontario in 1891 the son of two third-generation Irish immigrant parents, Coughlin's father was the sexton at the local Catholic Church where he and his wife had met.[6] Coughlin's parents desired him to be a priest from birth, and he received a strict religious education from his very early beginnings in Hamilton. First enrolled at St. Michael's prep school, which was attached to St. Michael's College of the University of Toronto, Coughlin entered the University of Toronto in 1907 to complete his degree in 1911.[7] Upon graduation, he entered St. Basil's Seminary in Toronto to prepare himself for the priesthood. Coughlin was trained for the priesthood by the Basilians who largely "opposed modern economic development and the role of money, banking, and, particularly, usury."[8] He would take many of the Thomistic doctrines he learned from the Basilians and the social justice papal encyclicals, "Rerum Novarum" and "Quadragesimo Anno," and transform them into a powerful message for political change by God's commandment.[9] Though later denounced by the social justice movement and prominent scholars like Ryan, Coughlin lifted these themes and, amalgamating them with the American Populist tradition of which he was familiar, molded them into something bold and dangerous. The social doctrines of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Pope Leo XIII, and Pope Pius XI, when blended with the Populism of Bryan and others, would become a powerful fomenting force for the Midwestern man and woman of the lower middle-class. Indeed this strange elixir of Coughlin's message would gain large audiences across the nation. It would lead the radio priest to form a nationwide party that, though resulting in a circus spectacle and huge electoral defeat in 1936, nonetheless could have easily been successful under slightly different circumstances and changed the course of history.

The Priest and the Shrine of the Little Flower

Coughlin trained for the priesthood for six years at the novitiate in Toronto, and it was there that he first acquainted himself with Pope Leo XIII's "Rerum Novarum" from which he would, according to his authorized biography, "interpret the Industrial Revolution of England, the mechanization of labor, [and] the use and abuse of money."[10] Ordained in June 1916, he was assigned to a Detroit parish, and in February 1923 he was incardinated into the Detroit diocese by the Reverend Michael Gallagher.[11] In 1926, he was assigned his own church in the growing and fast changing community of Royal Oak, north of Detroit. Coughlin made his first radio broadcast just four months after celebrating his first mass at the Shrine of the Little Flower in an effort to raise money for his church. Making a deal with CBS station WJR-Detroit, Coughlin delivered his first radio sermon on October 17, 1926, just six years after the birth of commercial broadcasting.[12]

Largely religious, Coughlin's Sunday radio sermons were first directed to children.[13] Soon, Coughlin renamed his program from "The Children's Hour" to "The Golden Hour" and began to reach a broad audience and a growing following. Coughlin's program was lucrative during these early years, though no one is sure exactly how much so.[14] By late 1928 he had earned enough money to begin construction of Crucifixion Tower at the little church. The Tower would become a monument to Coughlin's legacy; and he would come to broadcast from it every Sunday. In 1929, Coughlin added two new stations in Chicago and Cincinnati to his now established broadcasting network, the Radio League of the Little Flower.[15] His success continued to burgeon. In 1930, the radio priest began to broadcast nationally over CBS to a national audience that would reach up to 40 million people.

The Priest Tackles Politics

Until 1930, Coughlin's speeches remained largely religious sermons. The radio priest would begin to address politics in 1930 when he moved to criticize Communism as a threat to the United States following various economic crises in Detroit.[16] Though denouncing Communism was largely uncontroversial, Coughlin did find himself in trouble when he began speaking against the Treaty of Versailles in January 1931. Learning of the controversial nature of Coughlin's material before he went on the air, CBS moved to instruct Coughlin not to speak on the issue. After promising he would not, Coughlin did so anyway.[17] After escaping castigation by CBS, Coughlin began to feel free to speak out on any issue; as a result, he soon became exclusively political in his focus. Tying national political, social, and economic issues to religious principles, Coughlin began to criticize harshly the Hoover Administration and the failure of America's economic system to address the increasing problems of the Depression.

Over the next year, Coughlin began to speak of Prohibitionists, bankers, President Hoover, and those who opposed the Patman Bonus Bill. Though the issues he discussed were important, Alan Brinkley notes that it was not the issues "alone that accounted for his popularity. Other public figures espoused the same sort of vague radicalism during the period without evoking a comparable response. What made Coughlin different was his medium."[18] Over these years, Coughlin, as biographer Donald Warren explains, "invent[ed] the political soap opera."[19] As his political style matured, Coughlin began to discuss economic policy with increasing frequency and, in so doing, began to denounce American industry.[20] When Roosevelt announced his candidacy in early 1932 against the now largely unpopular Hoover, Coughlin met the President and began to support Roosevelt wholeheartedly. Even before Coughlin had even managed to defeat Catholic Al Smith in the Convention, he backed Roosevelt all the way.[21]

Roosevelt used Coughlin as a political tool throughout his campaign. Upon Roosevelt's win in 1932, it was clear that the two men would have a very interesting relationship over the next four years of the President's term. Engaging himself in monetary policy, Coughlin began to submit recommendations to the Roosevelt Administration and routinely harass White House staff members on this or that problem or issue.[22]

"Roosevelt or Ruin"

Eventually, the Coughlin-Roosevelt relationship grew thin as Coughlin became increasingly irritated at Roosevelt's total neglect of his policy recommendations. At the same time, the Roosevelt Administration became increasingly annoyed at the presumptuous radio priest submitting such recommendations. Despite a year of constant flattery in 1933,[23] Coughlin became less friendly to the President as he entrenched himself deeper and deeper into monetary issues he quite frankly did not have the economics background to understand. Urging silver remonetization in late 1933, Coughlin's frustration with Roosevelt began to show. Roosevelt adviser and confidante James P. Warburg, a Wall Street financier, reviewed Coughlin's idea of coining gold and silver in the same coin and dismissed it as utter rubbish. The radio priest then "retaliated by accusing Warburg of being a spokesman for the bankers and insinuating that he had profited from American participation in World War I."[24] Though Coughlin never again proposed his policy of symmetalism, his break with Roosevelt was aggravated when, on March 4, 1934, "the radio priest conceded that the New Deal had been 'more or less successful.'"[25] Despite these criticisms and Coughlin's increasingly desperate calls for monetary reform, he was always respectful of Roosevelt. Yet, his always changing and pie-eyed policies did begin to attract criticism.[26] In 1934, the *Nation* charged that Coughlin's monetary policies were "based

upon the theory that the imbecility of the people is usually greatly exaggerated. . . . He illustrates perfectly the way of the demagogue."[27]

The real fracture with Roosevelt came that April when the Treasury Department published the names of individuals who had made significant investments in silver. Included on the list was Coughlin's Radio League of the Little Flower and its secretary. Though Coughlin's secretary insisted that Coughlin knew nothing of the investments, the appearance afflicted much political and personal pain on Coughlin who was humiliated in the national press and who felt personally betrayed by Roosevelt.[28] It is unclear exactly how Coughlin felt about Roosevelt between April and November, when he announced the formation of the National Union, just as it is unclear as to exactly what his political motivations in launching the organization were. His statements throughout these months changed daily: one day he was half-endorsing Roosevelt and the next he was opposing the two-party system.[29] The ambiguity of his announcement of the National Union probably reflects much of this inconsistency and the inability of Coughlin to make up his mind. He wanted to make a strong statement in reaction to the failure of the New Deal to consider his policies, yet he did not want to alienate Roosevelt. "The National Union for Social Justice" announcement would become a turning point in Coughlin's career. Broadcast over the now forty stations that were part of his Radio League of the Little Flower, the address stormed the nation.

"The National Union for Social Justice": A Rhetorical Analysis

Coughlin announced his plan to establish the National Union for Social Justice on November 11, 1934, in his usual Sunday radio sermon. The speech epitomizes his rhetorical skill and initiated what was to be an almost two year campaign that would eventually aim to unseat Roosevelt. Calling for the repudiation of capitalism and communism alike, Coughlin

urged his followers to take up a "new call to arms for the establishment of social justice!"[30] Stirring in its emotionalism and fervent calls to execute "God's will," Coughlin's announcement exemplifies the anti-intellectual style. More aggressive in many ways than Long's "Every Man a King" address, "The National Union for Social Justice" speech utilizes many of the same rhetorical forms Long did in "Every Man a King" to achieve the same rhetorical effect.

A brilliant and riveting speech in its entirety, "The National Union for Social Justice" makes it much easier to understand the anxious positions of critics like Swing and the Lees. Possessing all the intensity and directness of Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of Angry God," Coughlin's address adopts Edwards' prophetically fiery style for a new century and purpose. Not crafted to the purpose of religious conversion and raising awareness of the depravity and futility of man, "The National Union for Social Justice" is a battle cry designed to *capture* the minds of Coughlin's audience, not turn them to God. As "Sinners" works to drive good Christian men and women into good Christian existences, "The National Union for Social Justice" address works to put fearful men and women into the hands of Coughlin. The speech functions to incapacitate the intellect of Coughlin's audience while directing their passions to whatever purpose he, their chosen and selfless leader, decrees. This incapacitation is achieved using many of the same rhetorical forms that Long uses in "Every Man a King," including the use of rhetorical questions, repetitive conjunctions and relative clauses, and the clever manipulation of pronouns.

The speech proceeds in five sections and advances in a fashion also similar to "Every Man a King." This is, admittedly, one of the reasons why both of these speeches were chosen. While touchstone pieces of each man's rhetoric, both speeches present need-remedy arguments as they make the case to establish each man's national organization. The first three sections of

Coughlin's discourse form a need argument consisting of two premises and a conclusion. The fourth section presents the National Union for Social Justice" as the remedy to the need Coughlin seeks to have people "recognize." The fifth section positions Coughlin as a prophet chosen to assume the burden of representing the common man and woman, the righteous laborer, in a struggle against injustice. Like Long, Coughlin portrays himself as a political savior, similarly acquiring a great amount of political capital vis-à-vis his dramatic identification with his audience. Although such likenesses between the two speeches abound, I will refrain from commenting further on these similarities until the conclusion of this chapter after a recreation of "The National Union for Social Justice" has been performed. This analysis will follow the same structure as did that in the third chapter, recreating the speech section by section according to its arrangement.

The Demand for Social Justice: The Constitution No Longer Realized

Coughlin opens the "National Union for Social Justice" by imagining the afternoon sixteen years prior to his address. Declaring that the years after the Treaty of Versailles witnessed a horrific series of events in the rise of Bolshevism, internationalism, and universal poverty, Coughlin tells his audience "I honestly believe that in all history such destruction of ideals and such miscarriage of justice were never chronicled save during the years which witnessed the assassination of Christ." Prophetically announcing the impending dooms that threaten America, Coughlin instructs his audience that "Instead of making the world safe for democracy, the bells which tolled their message sixteen years ago this afternoon were sounding its requiem. Instead of announcing that here was the end of all war, we were being ushered into a new conflict too terrible to contemplate." Immediately identifying with the fear and

dispossession of his audience, Coughlin's priestly ethos shimmers through his words as he warns of a day "beyond our reckoning."

The radio priest's use of anaphora is a common form appearing in the address from its beginning. Coughlin introduces the the second and third sentences of "The National Union for Social Justice" with "Instead of," providing the speech momentum and catching his audience in a set of arguments coming one after the other. Coughlin gives his audience little time to think on what he has said, and the reiteration merely links the arguments he makes together in such a way that they are hard to sort out and easy to simply accept. The use of anaphora disables the audiences' intellectual capacity insofar as it disguises new arguments and new things to accept in terms of phrases that have before been used, and when reiterated, tend to loan the speech a sense of unfolding inevitability. Hence, Coughlin's use of anaphora contributes to his prophetic style as he sermonically informs his audience of what has come and what will be. Like Long, Coughlin also employs rhetorical techniques common to evangelical persuasion, including the use of multiple conjunctions and relative clauses. The radio priest's frequent citing of authorities and the stylistic devices used to present these authorities produce a crescendo effect that overwhelm the audience into submission.

The chief subject of Coughlin's prophecy is modernity. The harms and impending threats of modernity are a common problem felt by Coughlin and his audience, and the radio priest wisely begins his speech by appealing to this feeling and prophesying what may come from a failure of the people to act. Contrasting the "cynical smile that we hope for peace" against the "laboratories of destruction the chemists of greed and of poverty, of hate and of lying propaganda," Coughlin creates a we-they dichotomy from the very beginning of his address. The chemists he reveals as evil are "menaces" to which "we are not blind." It will be his job to

see “their ghastly presence” and to find hope among the despair. Coughlin sees the evil of those who would destroy humanity in this modern world of destruction, and, acknowledging that his fellow persecuted citizens must see it as well, he sets out to empower his audience against the horror of “their ghastly presence.” *We* will prevail against *them*, Coughlin instructs. In Coughlin, it seems the people have a prophet in which to place their faith.

Following his introduction, Coughlin moves to establish the major premise of his need argument. Criticizing the Democratic Party for its failure to “answer the *simple* question of why there is want in the midst of plenty,” Coughlin characterizes the New Deal as “useless efforts for the preservation of a system, both economic and political, which once before watered the fields of Europe with blood and the highways of America with tears.” Drawing analogies between capitalism’s failure to answer the “simple” problems of the Depression and its role in bringing about the much resented First World War, Coughlin plays on the unpopularity of the First World War and tries to identify with his audience in affirming its wrongness while linking it, without justification, to capitalism and the Depression. The answer is simple, Coughlin reassures his audience. The fault is with capitalism and the unwillingness of those who benefit under the status quo to reverse the Depression’s course. Just as World War I led to the needless death of hundreds of thousands of Americans to protect what many in his audience considered moneyed interests and an aristocratic Europe, these same people were now the cause of the Depression.

“Truly, democracy itself is on trial,” Coughlin tells his audience. “Today the American people are the judge and jury who will support this Administration and accord it a sportsman’s chance to make good.” Giving the appearance of resting agency with his audience, Coughlin tells them that the choice of supporting Roosevelt is theirs. He then moves to preach, taking up the same prophetic tone he prefaced his address with:

> It has (the Roosevelt Administration) already subscribed to the principle that human rights must take precedence over financial rights. It recognizes that these rights far outweigh in the scales of justice wither political rights or so-called constitutional rights. It appears to be an Administration determined to read into the Constitution the definition of social justices which is already expressed in its very preamble. There we are taught that the very object of this Government is the establishment of justice, to insure domestic tranquility, to promote the general welfare and to provide the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity.

Seeking again to identify with his audience and persuade people who might also be supporters of Roosevelt, Coughlin speaks of the Administration as appearing to be in accord with the principles he describes as fundamental to the Constitution. Though Coughlin, the prophet, will soon reveal otherwise, it is important that he ascribe this appearance to Roosevelt so he can later show it to be false. Again utilizing anaphora, Coughlin instructs his audience that more than financial rights, political rights, or civil liberties, the Constitution places "the establishment of justice" as its first and most fundamental principle.

Justice being the purpose of government, Coughlin establishes his first premise: *The Constitution demands the establishment of social justice above all else, and any good government must act in accordance with this first and most fundamental aim*. Coughlin then storms boldly into a discussion of what he considers the "unconstitutional causes of the Depression" and how far the Roosevelt Administration has gone in "recognizing and utilizing this constitutional truth." Though Coughlin will assume the position of a benevolent instructor telling his audience what the problems of the status quo are and what Roosevelt has done to address them, it will be his audience with whom judgment ultimately rests, or at least ostensibly.

Deception and Lies: The Current System Is Not Just

Coughlin begins this section of his speech with "*let* me rehearse for you a few *facts* relative to the history of labor and of industry, of production and of unemployment. As *we* turn back the pages which tell *us* the story of the World War, we are convinced that it was organized and operated for commercial purposes and commercial gains." First, Coughlin makes it a point to say "let" me. He does this throughout the address. In saying "let me," or "may I ask you," Coughlin is asking for his audience's permission to explain to them the circumstances of the Depression. He thus affords them some feeling of power as they sit back and listen to his explanation (over radio no less); and this of course assists him in creating the illusion his audience has that they are in control.

Another worthwhile aspect of this sentence is Coughlin's use of the word "facts," a word he frequently repeats throughout the address. The word "fact" creates a sense of authority for what Coughlin has to say. It is not him telling "the story," but the pages of history. Such statements place Coughlin in the position of being a benevolent informer instructing his flocks of what the simple problem is and what they can do to solve it. In addition, Coughlin relies heavily on his use of "we." From the beginning, the radio priest generates a sense of communion with his audience in depicting history and the suffering of the Depression as something he and his audience together share and experience. He is one of them: he can be trusted as he reveals, as any good priest would, the objective simple truth.

Further bolstering his audience's sense of agency, Coughlin incorporates rhetorical questions throughout his address, and especially in his most authoritative sections. These questions seem to put power in the audiences' hands and involve them directly in discovering problems and seeking answers. However, this is not the case in reality. Coughlin makes

frequent use of "you" in framing these questions, heightening the effect of this illusion while almost creating a sense of fear on the part of his audience if they happen to answer his rhetorical question with anything less than a firm "yes!" to these strongly leading questions.

> Are you not aware of the fact that in 1914 England's financial and commercial supremacy were in jeopardy due to the rapid advance of German commerce? Are you not ignorant of the fact that during the first two years of the World War the United States industrialists and bankers had poured billions of credit dollars into the war chests of Great Britain? Need I remind you of the pledging on the part of English statesmen for is to enter the war. . . ?

Given little chance to question Coughlin's facts, he plows through his analysis of the First World War as "fought to make the world safe for Wall Street and the industrial bankers." Indeed, according to Coughlin, it is the bankers who "pervert" America. They "perverted" the mind of President Wilson, tricking him into the "fallacy that it was more sacred to protect the capitalistic dollar than to preserve the life of a mother's son!"

Following his analysis of the First World War, Coughlin begins his analysis of the Depression "born in 1918," telling his audience to "Be patient for a moment and I shall try to weave a few thoughts relative to his subject into a simple fabric of understanding." Adopting a rather paternal tone, Coughlin will "simplify" these answers for his audience. They become his helpless flock whom he will deliver from the storm and show the light.[31] According to Coughlin, America engaged in rapid production during the War to meet needs both abroad and at home, and, with a labor force lacking in young men, somehow managed to rapidly enhance it production power. Offering "mathematical, official figures," it is not so much Coughlin's substantive explanation of the causes of the Depression that prove interesting as much as it is the stylistic devices he uses in going about that explanation. Throughout its entirety, history is

always experienced by “we,” and the international bankers, financiers, industrialists, and politicians are always “they.” History is always occurring “naturally,” unfolding itself inevitably on the people as if they had no control of their material condition. Coughlin seems to play up this sense of helplessness in his use of long, flowing sentences composed of phrases that lead into one another. All the audience can do is to follow. Juxtaposed to these syntactical observations is Coughlin’s frequent use of rhetorical questions to create the illusion of agency and frequent use of “you” so that the individual auditor can feel some sense of empowerment in affirming his observations. Although Coughlin’s audience might be victims of inevitable history, they can at least gain some power over the course of events in asserting that they are victims of a corrupt system which has taken advantage of them.

According to Coughlin’s second premise, *the first and most fundamental aim of the Constitution, social justice, has not been established and is not being worked toward*. The “facts” contradict the Constitution’s most treasured principle. A “new problem of distribution” had seized America after the War, and Wall Street and the wealthy creditors were determined to keep production at war-time levels no matter the later disastrous effect on the economy. Coughlin asks his audience again rhetorically, “When we weave together the threads which the loom of fact has so clearly fabricated, to what conclusions are we forced as we view the labor situation between 1919 and 1929?” The conclusion to be drawn is so obvious that his audience is “forced” to draw it. Though the great majority of his audience had little to no understanding of economic policy, the radio priest told them that the explanations he offered were simple, natural, and so obvious that the audience member might well fear feeling stupid if they asked for further explanation. The truth is that Coughlin had only a slightly greater understanding than they did. Focusing more on the fact that they had been deceived, lied to, and generally taken

advantage of, which most of Coughlin's audience members understandably felt they had been, Coughlin offered his audience a means by which to alleviate their anxiety. He offered them a scapegoat on which to release their frustration and a set of answers by which to explain their own economic failure in a nation in which economic failure equates with moral failure.

Justice Restored: The Need for Redistribution and the Rejection of Capital

In a world of plenty in which production should no longer be a problem, Coughlin declares that "our problem shall be one of the distribution of the profits not only to the owners and stockholders but also to the laborers and mechanics, enabling all to live prosperously even when the wheels of industry have ceased operating." According to Coughlin, if the problem of distribution is not solved in two years, the United States will "witness a new form of government that will face it and attempt to solve it by some communistic means." Again utilizing anaphora, Coughlin declares "we have more acreage under cultivation, more factories equipped with the finest machinery, more educated scientists and skilled mechanics than any other nation in history. . . . Today there is want in the mist of plenty." Emphasizing his own authority and prophesy, Long now positions himself to formulate the conclusion of his need argument: *The current system is not capable of securing social justice, and therefore, it nor the Roosevelt Administration is in accordance with the Constitution.*

Assessing Roosevelt's New Deal policies, Coughlin judges them to be utterly ineffective and incapable of solving the problems of the Depression that can only be solved by significant wealth redistribution. According to Coughlin, Roosevelt has adopted a "philosophy of destructionism" premised on undermining productive capacity instead of simply distributing goods America is now capable of producing for everyone fairly.

> It is the philosophy which refuses to face the problem of distribution. It is the philosophy which is attempting to hold us manacled to an obsolete system of finance and of production for a profit only. It is the final attempt on the part of a decadent capitalism to destroy us into prosperity. It is similar to the program of bankers who, for ten years following the War, attempted to bond us with paper into gold prosperity. Now, my friends, let no one deceive you with the economic lie that there is over-production when millions are hungry. . . .

Again utilizing anaphora, Coughlin denounces the philosophy of the New Deal as unjust and cruelly responsible for the starvation of millions of Americans. Promulgating that the people are not to be deceived, he seems to vest the power to choose the truth in his audience. Yet, if questions are asked of Coughlin's analysis, of "the truth," then the people would only be showing their vulnerability to deception.

In proclaiming so boldly that the people are not blind and that they will not choose to be deceived, Coughlin makes it very hard for his followers to challenge him when he implicitly tells them that doing so is tantamount to thinking as "they"—the wealthy capitalists—would have "You" think. Instead, "you" the audience should join "we"/"us," the formerly persecuted but now revolutionary group of righteous common men and women gathered to defeat capitalism and restore the principles of the Constitution. Closing this section of his speech, Coughlin delivers a final repudiation of the status quo:

> *Our* government still upholds one of the worst evils of decadent capitalism, namely, that production must be only at a profit for the owners, for the capitalist, and not for the laborer. This philosophy of finance, or of distribution of the profits, based on the theory of "pay-while-*you*-work" for the laborer can only be identified with the destruction of the entire system of capitalism.

Capitalism must be replaced, according to Coughlin; and stylistically the priest has done everything in his power to put the people in charge of replacing it. They seem to be standing up to the authority that has kept them in chains since long before the First World War. In reality they act in fear of being considered duped—in fear of questioning Coughlin, in fear of seeking deeper explanations of the Depression and more complicated solutions, and in fear of thinking for themselves. The dogmatic power of "facts" and "official" numbers proves too cumbersome to their understanding, and Coughlin, seeking to identify himself as one of them, provides a path to security in a world that seems very much to be conspiring against them. To stave off the evils of Communism and the despair of modern capitalism, Coughlin's audience chooses authoritarianism.

The People's Solution

After coming to his conclusion that "the philosophy of finance" need be rejected and before moving onto what he proposes as his remedy—the Sixteeen Principles of the National Union for Social Justice—Coughlin engages in solidifying the conclusion of his need argument while preparing a solution that "we" may use. The solution offered is that of the people versus that of the wealthy industrialists. In drawing a stark contrast between the two, Coughlin highlights the difference between the Roosevelt Administration's New Deal and his own proposal.

The many Coughlinites listening who were likely to be fans of the New Deal were now probably on the fence in many ways about what they thought about Roosevelt and Coughlin. . Coughlin tells his audience

> Were I addressing a group of industrialists I would inquire of them whether or not *they* were of the opinion that this technical unemployment . . . could continue. Surely, *they* must

> recognize that industrial competition must produce newer inventions, newer machinery and longer breadlines. I would ask the industrialists whether or not *they* and *their children* logically anticipate a time in the not distant future when they will become targets for the wrath of a despoiled people. Do *they* not remember the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution? Do *they* know that human nature does not change? I would plead with *them*, for *their* own self-preservation, if not for no other reason, to cooperate with the government as it will move, *we* hope, towards the shortening of hours for all engaged in mass production activity and towards an annual wage system that is just and equitable and thus permit American workmen to preserve the American standard of living.

Talking to his listeners as if they were confidants that acknowledge the need to reject capitalism, Coughlin presents to his audience a series of rhetorical questions premised on a series of answers that surely wealthy industrialists ("they") must know. Wealthy industrialists should know that capitalism can only continue for so long before leading to Communist revolution, they should know that the current system will only create longer breadlines, and they should know that America's only hope is in changing the American system to provide greater benefits for the people. In questioning this as the solution, "they" are foolish. In contrast, "we," Coughlin and his followers," have hope. Upon drawing a sharp distinction between "we" and "they" in which it does not seem possible for answers to lie anywhere in between, Coughlin emphasizes the "we" into which he has now collectively bonded his audience:

> The annual wage shall not be one that will permit us merely to subsist. It must be one that will keep us on the level of the American standard of living. That is why our foreparents forsook Europe to come to America. That is what we shall fight for. By no means shall we

> despairingly admit that all is lost. All is not lost if we only have the courage to adopt the policy of producing for use at a profit for all—the owner and the laborer.

We have hope. *They* are only blinded by greed. Marginalizing his opponent, Coughlin creates a righteous "we" that hopes and shares a common experience and commitment to the constitutional principles of social justice that preserve a uniquely *American* way of life.

After emphasizing the "we" some more, Coughlin moves back to the position of the industrialists who at this point are so corrupted by greed and the philosophies of finance and destructionism that they are destined to be doomed. As Christ cursed the moneychangers, Coughlin declares

> You industrialists, surrounded as you are by your economists and anxious to form organizations for the protection of property rights and for the perpetuation of your profit system. But, may I ask you, of what value are property rights unless they are firmly established on the sanctity of human rights? Are those of you who own and control wealth ignorant of the fact that labor owes no rights to capital unless capital performs its duty towards labor? Are you forgetful, ye princes of this world's goods, that you are not better than stewards designated to manage justly and fairly the property of this world which belongs not to you but to the one God who created you? In the event of strikes produced under your unjust economic system where men are forced to starve because there is no work at a profit for the owner, are you men foolish enough to think that the moral law of God shall force the working men to disobey the first command of all—the command of self-preservation—and follow, in its stead, your man-made precept of property preservation? Are you so misguided by your advisors as to believe that, because you own a factory, or a bank, or a fortune, you can use it as you will to the detriment of the common good? And on this Armistice Day,

> when the murmurings of discontent are rumbling throughout the capitalists of this world, when armies are being marshaled and new cannons forged, are you so bereft as to think for a moment that the men and women, whom your system has starved for five long years, will shoulder arms to protect your rights and your property and your rotten policies?

In many ways the climax of Coughlin's address, this rapid-faced set of rhetorical questions directed to the wealthy bankers and industrialists is not at all directed toward them, but rather to the audience member still in doubt. "You," formerly the audience member who must decide between Coughlin's proposal and the philosophy of destructionism, is now used to refer to the wealthy bankers and industrialists, formerly "they." The message: *If you do not join us, you must be they*. Warring soldiers full of hope, Coughlin's audience will fight for what their foreparents came to America for. As Christ cursed the money changers and the Pharisees, so Coughlin curses the wealthy and the corrupt politicians and economists who offer false, man-made precepts in conflict with God's holy commands. Human rights are "sacred" and inviolate, yet are being trumped by property rights in a nation in which money has become a graven image. Coughlin, the prophet, will restore what has become "rotten." He is the hope of the people, their comfort in graven times.

After declaring in one simple declarative sentence, "Modern capitalism is destroying itself at both ends," Coughlin turns "you" back on the audience:

> It (modern capitalism) speaks to the youth of the nation with this bright sentence: 'You are inexperienced. We do not want you.' To the matured laborers in industry who are forty-five years of age, it says: 'You must retire simply because the compensation insurance rate is too high for us and the insurance companies of this nation do not care to risk you.

Then, immediately, Coughlin shifts the referent of "you" back to the wealthy:

> There are 21-million boys and girls in our public school system. Approximately 1-million in our colleges and universities will soon be knocking at your doors for employment. For the older ones you will try to rewrite the natural law of God as you preach to them the reasonableness of birth control when you really mean the godlessness of wealth control.

"You," the audience member who has long been tortured and helpless now has the opportunity to be empowered if "you" join with "us." Shifting the referent of "you" back to the wealthy, Coughlin completes the transformation. "You" is no longer the audience member, but the condemned wealthy banker and industrialist left to fate. "You" preaches falsely and is concerned only with world things. Contrasted to "we," the people who struggle righteously, the meek who shall inherit the earth, Coughlin creates a dichotomy that functions to secure his followers under the auspices of his priestly control. Likening modern capitalism to slavery, the radio priest declares that its yoke must be broken, that "There will be no expulsion of radicals until the causes which breed radicals will first be destroyed!" Declaring both capitalism and communism to be inherent evils, both allegiances to false prophets and false gods, Coughlin creates, by contrast, devotion to him and his proposal as the only true way. He is the true prophet of the one true God. "Away with both of them!" he decries. "But never into the discard with the liberties which we have already won and the economic liberty which we are about to win—or die in the attempt!"

Now the warrior priest, Coughlin tells his audience of his long days and hours spent receiving letters from the suffering disenfranchised. Casting away the Republican and Democratic parties, Coughlin somberly declares: "But happy or unhappy as I am in my position, I accept the challenge to organize for obtaining, for securing and for protecting the principles of

social justice." The burden is Coughlin's, and he has elevated himself as a Christ-figure, for better or worse, to be sacrificed with the cause for which he fights.

> *I* realize that *I* am more or less a voice crying in the wilderness. *I* realize that the doctrine which *I* preach is disliked and condemned by the princes of wealth. What *I* care for that! And, more than all else, *I* deeply appreciate how limited my qualifications are to launch this organization which shall be known as the NATIONAL UNION FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE.
>
> The die is cast! The word has been spoken! And by it *I* am prepared to stand or to fall. . . .

"I, the prophet!" Coughlin might as well declare. Using "I" plentifully, Coughlin elevates his own personality and position over that of his audience before asking them, again rhetorically, what exactly the solution of his proposal is: "How shall we organize? To what principles of social justice shall we pledge ourselves? What actions shall we take?" Coughlin then sets out to preface his principles with a preamble "that we are creatures of a beneficent God, made to love and to serve Him in this world and to love and enjoy Him forever in the next. . . ." Excluded from this "we" are the wealthy. Coughlin's sixteen principles only apply to the righteous.

Promulgating that it is "towards the realization" of these principles which "we must strive," Coughlin marks the actualization of each principle as a mission in which his followers are united to accomplish. Similar to the Nicene Creed, each principle starts with the simple phrase "I believe." Substituting "I" for "we," Coughlin moves agency back to his audience. To join the righteous, they will join with Coughlin in declaring their individual submission to each principle. Rather generic, the principles lay out the basic framework for a socialist corporate state in which private property is protected, but many public resources "too important to be held in the control of private individuals" are nationalized. Many of the principles, such as the nationalization-private property principles, easily conflict with one another; and none of the

principles declares much more than a vague belief in a general principle or an ascription to a basic economic policy, e.g., the abolition of tax-exempt bonds and a stronger graduated progressive taxation system. Yet, they are principles that "we" hold against "them," and as a result, serve the function of uniting the people under the radio priest.

I, the Prophet!: Executor of God's Will

Upon declaring his principles, Coughlin concludes his speech in a rallying cry against the status quo. This rallying cry affirms his position as the people's leader and highlights their submission to him as their warrior priest. "I have spoken to some of you for nine years over this microphone and to most of you for more than three years," Coughlin tells his audience.

> Today I call upon you to assemble your ranks for action. Thus, in the name of the God of our fathers, we can look forward to better days to come. But without His principles of justice and of charity reduced into practice there is little hope either for ourselves or for the children who will follow us.

The Sixteen Principles of the National Union for Social Justice are no longer just Coughlin's, but are God's. Thus, Coughlin increases the penalty for not accepting them and positions himself as bringing God's principles to the people. Thus he affirms his standing as their prophet. According to Coughlin, he is "not in it for the commercial profit, because I am talking to the poor, talking to the dispossessed, talking to the jobless and talking against those who possess the means to sustain this broadcast." In it for the masses, Coughlin wraps up his address.

In his last request of his audience, Coughlin summarily states "All I ask is that those who apply for membership will be men and women of courageous heart and intrepid spirit willing and ready to suffer." The costs of following a prophet are high, he reminds his audience, and the National Union for Social Justice demands their full devotion. Extending the challenge,

Coughlin again seemingly places power back into the hands of the people. Of taking up this mission of suffering, Coughlin decrees: "God wills it! This is the new call to arms—not to become cannon fodder for the greedy system of an outworn capitalism or factory fodder for the slave whip of communism. This is the new call to arms for the establishment of social justice! God wills it! Do you?" Concluding his speech, Coughlin shifts agency back on his audience. If they have followed his arguments so far, how can they not will it? The Constitution wills it, history wills it, God wills it, and never are these interpretations subject to doubt. They are always presented by Coughlin as dogmas. In affirming Coughlin's final rhetorical question, the radio priest's auditor joins his flock of disposed, united in the suffering "we" of the righteous embattled against the evil "they" of the wealthy.

The Anti-Intellectual Style as Over-Identification, Possession, and Incapacitation

"The National Union for Social Justice" was a success insofar as it strengthened Coughlin's reputation across the country and fueled his campaign against Roosevelt. Largely designed to acquire political capital for Coughlin and not to result in thousands of chapters, as was the hope of "Every Man a King,"[32] Coughlin's speech accomplished its goal. Media coverage of his political activities increased, his mail grew, and talk of him as a political threat to Roosevelt abounded.

Strengthening and solidifying the radio priest's political program, Coughlin's address is representative of the whole of his speech and of the anti-intellectual style. Celebrating the common man, the laborer, as "Every Man a King" did, "The National Union for Social Justice" similarly aims to capture the mind of its audience. Utilizing many of the same rhetorical forms Long did—the employment of "you"-"they"-"we" shifts, the use of anaphora, the syntactical creation of a prophetic tone—Coughlin's speech parallels Long's in numerous ways. Working to

generate the illusion of agency, a false sense of empowerment, and a harshly divisive and intimidating we-they dichotomy, "The National Union for Social Justice" has many of the same multifaceted political effects on the auditor as does "Every Man a King." Most important, like "Every Man a King," it shares in the definitive function of anti-intellectual speech: the subsuming of the auditor in the overwhelming presence of a powerful rhetor vis-à-vis a process of over-identification.

Using identification as more than just a fulcrum by which to persuade, Coughlin, like Long, approaches speech as a means to take possession of his auditor and so wield social control. The "we" Coughlin creates with the invention of the National Union has the same effect as the "we" Long creates in "Every Man a King." The auditor, now comforted by Coughlin's message of hope against an evil and conspiring "they," has found hope and security in the empty message of authoritarianism. At the same time, the auditor is utterly fearful of being cast outside this rhetorical "we" and into the damned "they." Avoiding weeping and gnashing of teeth, Coughlin's followers are inclined to comply with the priest's descriptions of the status quo and instruction. Anxious in regard to their own economic-moral failings, Coughlin offers easy solutions and a scapegoat by which to expiate his lower middle-class audience. Needing to be perceived as predestined to receive Heaven's bounty, and ever nervous about being perceived instead as one of Coughlin's identified damned, the radio priest's followers are put in a very difficult position if they wish to protest the priest's conclusions. More style than substance, "The National Union for Social Justice" remains completely vague in respect to its frequently nebulous and conflicting principles. The speech seems little more at first than an articulating of his audience's discontent—Coughlin little more than a surrogate spokesman.[33] However, as

close-textual analysis reveals, the radio priest is much more than just the mouthpiece of the dispossessed laborer.

Throughout the address, Coughlin takes the frustrations and suspicions of the people and, to use a favorite term of his, "weaves" them into a vision of good versus evil in which good must be united and led to conquer a common evil. The black-and-white oversimplification of his address should be enough to raise the brow of the responsible critic. Upon paying closer attention to how the discourse functions, it is soon revealed to the critic that Coughlin's principal aim is to gain the trust and confidence of his audience by way of identification, disable their intellectual ability to question, and lead them to whatever plan of hope he might offer. As with "Every Man a King," in submission comes comfort. In joining with Coughlin in a "we" that shall prevail over this evil, the radio priest's followers alleviate their anxieties in soul-soothing dogmas that assure them of their own ultimate salvation. To think freely, to question, to look beyond the surface is to risk this salvation. In seeking answers beyond God's basic tenets as Coughlin interprets them, those who dare to use their intellect risk being cast into Coughlin's dreaded out-group of wealthy bankers, industrialists, and politicians.

David H. Bennett insightfully points out, "Coughlin looked like a millennial savior and to most he was a father figure."[34] Noting that many of his followers wrote and referred to him simply as "Father," even his Protestant followers, Bennett concludes that Coughlin played classically off the neurotic anxiety of the people. Making note of Franz Neumann's findings, Bennett writes that in Coughlin's case it is clear that "anxiety can be overcome by means of identification with a leader."[35] However, more than just simple identification, Coughlin's anti-intellectual discourse is designed to incapacitate intellect and utterly subsume and possess the freethinking individual. Consequently, like the rhetoric of Long, it is anathema to democracy.

Anti-intellectual speech is an infection of the public sphere of which all lovers of democracy must be concerned.

NOTES

[1] John Ryan, "Msgr. Ryan Backs Coughlin's Stand," *New York Times*, December 5, 1933.

[2] Ryan, quoted in Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p. 260. Ryan's accusation against Coughlin was in response to the radio priest's attack on President Roosevelt.

[3] David Terrance Coe, "A Rhetorical Study of Selected Radio Speeches of Reverend Charles Edward Coughlin (Unpublished Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1970), p. vii.

[4] Donald Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), p. 62.

[5] Alfred McClung Lee and Elizabeth Briant Lee, *The Fine Art of Propaganda: A Study of Father Coughlin's Speeches* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1939), 11. Cf. Charles E. Coughlin, "The Corporate State (March 13, 1938)," *Sixteen Radio Lectures: 1938 Series* (Detroit, MI: Condon Printing Company, 1938), pp. 89-99.

[6] Brinkley, p. 84.

[7] Louis B. Ward, *Father Charles E. Coughlin: An Authorized Autobiography* (Detroit, MI: Tower Publications, 1933), pp. 10-11.

[8] Ibid., p. 11.

[9] See John Gerard Doran, "The Analysis and Criticism of the Rhetoric of Father Charles E. Coughlin" (Unpublished Dissertation, University of California at Los Angeles, 1974), 113-130. Doran gives a thorough account of Coughlin's familiarity with the encyclicals and a context for their own emergence within the Catholic social justice movement that resulted from the discontents of Europe and the growing fear of Communism. See also David J. O'Brien, *American Catholics and Social Reform* (New York: Oxford University, 1968).

[10] Ward, p. 14.

[11] Ibid., p. 16.

[12] Warren, p. 23.

[13] Ibid., p. 24.

[14] Brinkley, p. 91.

[15] Ibid., p. 92.

[16] Charles J. Tull, *Father Coughlin and the New Deal* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1965), pp. 4-6.

[17] Ward, pp. 83-87.

[18] Brinkley, p. 97.

[19] Warren, p. 23.

[20] Susan Zickmund, "The Shepherd of the Discontented: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Discourse of Father Charles E. Coughlin" (Unpublished dissertation, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1993), p. 89.

[21] Brinkley, pp. 108-109.

[22] Tull, pp. 33-38.

[23] Brinkley, p. 109.

[24] Tull, p. 50.

[25] Ibid., p. 53.

[26] Brinkley, p. 113.

[27] "Gentile Silver," *Nation* (1934), quoted in Ibid.

[28] Tull, p. 55.

[29] Ibid., p. 60.

[30] Charles E. Coughlin, "The National Union for Social Justice (November 11, 1934)," can be accessed online through a special section of the Social Security Administration's website, "The History of Social Security" (http://www.ssa.gove/history/fcspeech.html)

[31] Zickmund makes a similar observation of Coughlin's discourse as a whole: "Coughlin, the expert with divine support, would lead his audience, a group of inarticulate and incompetent but nevertheless benevolent people, in his crusade against a satanic enemy, the bankers (p. 205)."

[32] Brinkley, pp. 133-5.

[33] Carpenter, p. 56.

[34] David H. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression: American Radicals and the Union Party, 1932-1936* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), p. 62.

[35] Ibid. Cf. Franz Neumann, "Anxiety in Politics," *Dissent* (Spring, 1955), 2, no. 2, p. 141.

CHAPTER 5
FREEDOM IN DIALOGUE

Until secrecy, prejudice, bias, misrepresentation, and propaganda as well as sheer ignorance are replaced by inquiry and publicity, we have no way of telling how apt for judgment of social policies the existing intelligence of the masses may be.[1]
--John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems*

Great men, great nations, have not been boasters and buffoons, but perceivers of the terror of life and have manned themselves to face it.[2]
--Ralph Waldo Emerson

Huey Long and Father Coughlin most captured public attention after they were denounced the dining room of New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel by General Hugh S. Johnson, former director of the National Recovery Administration. The speech was broadcast live by the National Broadcasting Company and heard over hundreds of thousands of people's radios. Johnson condemned Long and Coughlin as a double threat and asserted that the two men were working together in attempt to topple the government. While Johnson's accusation about the two men's collusion was utterly unfounded, the fear that drove his criticism is significant insofar as it brought together concerns previously expressed by numerous critics of both men and ossified them into a very public and very bold, even reactionary, response. Accusing Long and Coughlin of "preaching not construction but destruction—not reform but revolution," Johnson castigated both as speaking "with nothing of learning, knowledge nor experience. . . ." [3] However, while both men were certainly grave threats to American democracy it is important not to launch into the sort of anxious tirade that Johnson did. The threat of Long and Coughlin and their infection of the public sphere is rather best dealt with by careful, considered analysis of the rhetorical styles of both men—specifically, the anti-intellectual style and its effect on the American public sphere.

While many in the media had carefully hinted at the threat of both politicians and the parallels to the rise of Hitler and other authoritarians across Europe, the press' response after the

speech was "like the break-up of a long and hard Winter."[4] Coughlin appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* a few days after under the headline "Demagogues," and Long and Coughlin were both discussed in the cover story of *Time* the following week.[5] Johnson had created a media furor in what Raymond Gram Swing characterized as an act of "political feeble-mindedness."[6] The ferocity and lack of consideration of the denunciation allowed Long and Coughlin to attract even more public attention.

Most demonstrative of this effect was Long's response to Johnson on March 7 in a forty-five minute speech on NBC.[7] Focusing little on the General, Long claimed that "It will serve no purpose to our distressed people for me to call my opponents even more bitter names than they call me. Even were I able, I have not the time to present my side of the argument and match them in billingsgate or profanity."[8] Coughlin responded similarly in his radio sermon the next Sunday. Instead of drawing the public's attention in a calm, controlled, and rational manner to the demagogic qualities in both man's rhetoric, Johnson's speech made for a media circus that shifted power directly into the hands of Long and Coughlin. Instead of responding as irrationally as Johnson, the Kingfish and the radio priest instead crafted messages designed to reach the American people on the most personal levels. Skillfully appealing to their alienation and feelings of dispossession, Long and Coughlin were able to identify with their audience in such a way as to be able to wield social control over them.

In contrast to Johnson, what is needed from the critic in response to demagogy is a consideration of just what exactly the demagogue is attempting to do and how he or she goes about doing it. I have demonstrated that Long 'sand Coughlin's discourses functioned to subsume the auditor into the identity of the rhetor. By first over-identifying with their audience, Long and Coughlin then proceeded to take control of their thoughts and incapacitate their

intellect. In this final chapter I will first present brief histories and assessments of the political careers of Long and Coughlin. The chapter then discusses the anti-intellectual style in greater depth, considering its impact on the modes of democratic participation and how it structures political experience. I then move to examine the impact of radio, removing communication from an interactive public sphere to many non-interactive private spheres, and how the medium of radio combined with the anti-intellectual style to generate a powerful political impact on democratic society. To end my treatment of the anti-intellectual style, I consider communication as a shared experience essential to democracy and make a case for the importance of maintaining a properly functioning deliberative democracy that provides for freedom in dialogue.

Forces to be Feared: Considering Long and Coughlin

After the Kingfish delivered his "Every Man a King" and Coughlin addressed "The National Union for Social Justice," both rose to even more prominent positions of power. Though they would ultimately fail in their goal to defeat Roosevelt, the rhetoric driving their rather incoherent and amorphous organizations created resurgence in the careers of both men. Both speeches and their subsequent rhetoric won Long and Coughlin new supporters and put increasing pressure on the Roosevelt Administration towards which both had become increasingly hostile. Their ability to reach so many followers, raise fear in so many critics, and continually put pressure on the President is an example of the power of modern political communication. It is also an example of the danger such communication poses to society when it targets the intellect and renders null and void the very first premise of sustainable democracy—that of the freethinking individual.

Following "Every Man a King," Long's national career picked up sharply as Share Our Wealth clubs formed across the country, subscriptions to the *American Progress* increased,[9] and

talk of the Kingfish abounded on city streets, in country cafes, and through political circles from St. Louis to Atlanta to Boston. Picking up members more slowly in the Midwest and New England, Long gained huge numbers of followers after February in both the Western and mid-Atlantic states, particularly in California.[10] Throughout 1934 and 1935, Long made breakthroughs in sections of the country that had paid him little notice—except perhaps the occasional chagrin when he made the news for talking about potlikker or wearing his pajamas to greet state officials. Alan Brinkley cites the observation of Utah resident Frank Joesten. Attending a state meeting in early 1935 of Utah's Reform Taxpayers League, Joesten wrote:

> Jim, I never saw a crowd turn loose like that, not for a long time, they just about lifted the roof and amongst them were several that had referred to Long not more than a year ago as a damn fool and a 'nut,' also in a crowd I recognized a lot of local democrat politicians some political appointees on the various F.E.R.A., H.O.L.C., and other Government organizations too numerous to mention, and they were applauding with the rest.[11]

Winning multitudes of new followers, Share Our Wealth caught the attention of many new critics as well, and numerous articles began to appear in the *Nation* and the *New York Times* about the political potential of Louisiana's "backwoods" senator. As time passed, many of these news items became increasingly critical and worried that Long might pose a serious risk to the Democratic Party come the 1936 election.

These concerns were not reserved to the press. During the spring of 1935, the Democratic National Convention, increasingly wary of a Long threat to the Democratic ticket in the coming year, conducted its poll of 31,000 potential voters to assess the Kingfish's impact. The Roosevelt Administration was so worried about the possibility of a Long victory that they seriously consider placing Louisiana under federal military occupation.[12] It has also widely been

argued that Long had much to do with Roosevelt's turn to the left in 1935 and his enactment of the Second New Deal. An example of this is Roosevelt's proposed Wealth Tax Act of 1935. The legislation instituted a high surtax on the wealthy classes. Part of a broader public relations campaign, the President was demonstrating his willingness to address the wealth concentration problem and distance himself from accusations that he was in alliance with the rich.[13] "Every Man a King" and the creation of Share Our Wealth clubs everywhere fueled the Long movement, making politics more difficult for both Roosevelt and other traditional politicians. It is not at all a stretch to view the Second New Deal as an attempt by Roosevelt to co-opt the forces of Long and Coughlin.[14]

In the spring of 1935 Long would broadcast seven speeches before his political assassination on September 8, 1935, in Baton Rouge. No doubt an increasing threat, it is impossible to know what might have happened had Long not been shot that summer day in Louisiana's capitol. Alan Brinkley does note that while "it was no secret by the summer of 1935 that [Long and Coughlin] were contemplating a challenge to the President in the 1936 election," there were indications that "they could not be sure their supporters would follow them."[15] Roosevelt was an extremely popular president, and many of Long's supporters, as well as Coughlin's, had a tremendous amount of respect for him. Indeed, the splits between Long and Coughlin and Roosevelt created a great amount of cognitive dissonance for many Long and Coughlin supporters.[16] While the Kingfish's popularity burgeoned after "Every Man a King," there is simply no telling if he could have defeated Roosevelt in 1936. However, that it was even a possibility attests greatly to Long's political-rhetorical success.

The history of Coughlin and the National Union is a more complicated one. While Coughlin became more specific in his speeches following his November 1934 address

announcing the formation the National Union and its principles, "the means of turning those ideals into practical reality remained purposefully vague."[17] Indeed, it was not at all clear after the address what exactly the organization was to be or how it would be structured. In answering these questions, all Coughlin said was that it would ascribe to the Sixteen Principles. In the end, the organization ended up functioning much like a third-party; Coughlin would later expand upon its function as serving as "an articulate, organized lobby of the people to bring united pressure upon the representatives at Washington for the purpose of securing passage of those laws which we want passed."[18] Although not at first to be engaged in electoral politics, the nature of the organization would evolve as it formed throughout 1935 to culminate in the National Union for Social Justice's powerful role in the Union Party of 1936.

The National Union managed to attract enough followers and financial support by January 1935 that Coughlin decided to engage it in direct battle with the Roosevelt Administration and the Senate. Just as the treaty was about to be passed entering the United States into the World Court, Coughlin decided to seize the opportunity to test the strength of his organization and strike fear into the hearts of Roosevelt and the Congress. It was to be a grand entry for a new political force. Ratification of the World Court treaty had been delayed for four years under President Hoover, and come January 16, 1935, President Roosevelt sent the treaty to the Senate. Though largely thought to easily pass the Senate with the necessary two-thirds majority, Coughlin made an impassioned appeal against the bill: "Today—tomorrow may be too late—today, whether you can afford it or not, send your Senators telegrams telling them to vote 'NO' on our entrance into the World Court. . . . Keep America safe for Americans and not the hinting ground of international plutocrats!"[19] Barraged with telegrams and lines into Washington jammed, the vote on Tuesday seemed no longer to favor the Roosevelt

Administration.[20] The 52 for ratification-36 against result was a humiliation for Roosevelt. After the vote, Coughlin congratulated his listeners and told them that "through the medium of radio and the telegram you possess the power to override the invisible government; to direct your representatives on individual matters of legislation."[21]

Following Coughlin's World Court victory, he began to call for massive restructuring of the Federal Reserve and attempted to use the National Union for Social Justice, or at least the claim of its growing membership and its contributions, to this end. The National Union for Social Justice had a huge night on May 22, 1935, when many of its members packed into Madison Square Garden to hear Coughlin speak. To 23,000 people, some hearing the speech from the basement, Coughlin announced that "The National Union, employing not only the radio, but also utilizing the telegraph, or when time permits, the nationally owned post office, proposes to revive the meaning of democracy as it was conceived by the fathers of this country."[22] Now professing itself as an "articulate, organized lobby of the people," the National Union was significant insofar as "It represented not only the fusing of politics with celebrity but marked the beginning of audience participation, in which the passive mass became an action group."[23]

Yet, the organization always remained largely synonymous with Coughlin and his prior efforts directed from the Shrine of the Little Flower. Never did the National Union move to take action independent from Coughlin's dictates. Worried that "imposing a formal structure upon the National Union" might bog the organization down in local affairs, the radio priest did not move to create a genuine apparatus for the organization until December 1935.[24] Declaring his intention to make the National Union more than just a glorified mailing list, as it was so often accused by critics of being, Coughlin claimed that the organization would "now establish

organizations in every Congressional district, elect officers, recruit members, and raise funds. Each local unit was to support candidates without regard to party affiliation; their only criterion would be their willingness to endorse the principles of social justice."[25] However, Coughlin would always wield significant control over the National Union from the top down.

The National Union merged with the Townsend movement that had taken a hold of the West, and which, by 1935, was gaining popularity in the East. It was then that the organization began to face significant internal problems.[26] Uniting with Dr. Francis Townsend and his advocating for old-age pensions, as well as with Gerald K. Smith following Long's assassination, Coughlin began to merge the National Union with what would become the Union Party ticket. Though the Union Party's following would never effectively organize around a common set of principles advanced by all three men, the Union Party selected a candidate in reluctant North Dakota congressman William Lemke. After a humiliating convention in Cleveland in October 1936 in which Coughlin, Smith, and Townsend all sounded disparate notes and competed for the national stage, the Union Party seemed most certainly doomed. Lemke seemed little more than a sideshow and the press made numerous jokes about the infighting within the party. The *Nation* was completely correct in its assessment: "There is nothing so damaging to a panacea as another panacea on the same platform."[27] Struggling to even appear on the ballot, Lemke won only two percent of the vote. Following the Union Party's sound defeat, Coughlin retreated from national politics and resigned himself to a message that would grow increasingly intolerant and hateful for the rest of his career. In his later years, in relative isolation at his church and broadcast booth in the Shrine of the Little Flower and its Crucifixion Tower, Coughlin would endorse anti-Semitism, hail Mussolini's Italy as an example of fine government, express various Nazi sympathies, and oppose U.S. entry into World War II.[28]

Despite his failure to come close to challenging Roosevelt and his rather sad demise, Coughlin's impact on the early 1930s was enormous. Attracting the largest radio audience in the world, receiving more mail than the President, and managing to defeat the ratification of an international treaty after delivering only one radio speech all demonstrate the radio priest's power to drive people to take action. Just as Long's political power came from his ability to turn out large electoral numbers, Coughlin's power came from his rhetorical ability to win a large following and incite that following whenever he saw fit. Had a president not as popular and skilled as Roosevelt been seated, or had Long never been assassinated, or had Coughlin better sense than to unite with Smith and Townsend, the story may well have been different. What is important for the purpose of this thesis is that the Long and Coughlin movements progressed as far as they did, and how they managed rhetorically to do so.

The Anti-Intellectual Style: Over-Identification, Possession, and Incapacitation

Assessing the impact of the anti-intellectual style on the structuring of political experience takes this study back to the goal of Edwin Black's critical device, the "second persona." Working to find "the image of a man" in the discourse of Long and Coughlin, this study has embraced the assumption "that rhetorical discourses, either singly or cumulatively in a persuasive movement, will imply an auditor, and that in most cases the implication will be sufficiently suggestive as to enable the critic to link this implied auditor to an ideology."[29] Extracting an ideology from the speech of Long and Coughlin has been a difficult task for historians and journalists who have struggled with the substantive ambiguities of both men's arguments and had a difficult time deciding what ideological label to pin on either.

Alan Brinkley probably came the closest to an understanding of Long and Coughlin's ideology when he concluded it to be grounded in a reaction to modernity. One thesis of

Brinkley's study is that such answers are best illuminated in discussing the rhetorical style both leaders utilized. As Robert Hariman notes, through political style politicians move to shape their audience's public actions, and the character of the political style utilized is largely determinative of those actions. In other words, Long and Coughlin's Depression Populist ideology can best be understood after isolating the projection of man and woman that their discourse implies. For both men, this image is of an insecure non-participant in a desperate search for security. The ideology of Depression Populism, as has been noted, is not one of real political empowerment, but rather of reactions to the fears and anxieties of economic collapse, social unrest, and political anomie. The discourse of Long and Coughlin works to structure their audience's political experience insofar as the anti-intellectual style of both loans the auditor a false sense of empowerment. Subsuming the individual auditor into a collective cult of authority in which all are obliged to agree with the dogmas and dictates of their leaders, the anti-intellectual style thwarts free dialogue and replaces communication between equals with submission to the authoritarian. Discussing how this broad political effect is achieved, I will discuss the anti-intellectual style as a tripartite process involving over-identification, possession, and the incapacitation of intellect.

Over-Identification

Kenneth Burke describes identification as that process by which two separate individuals with two different sets of interests come to identify with one another.[30] For Burke, the rhetor who desires "to change an audience's opinion in one respect" may be able to "succeed only insofar as he yields to that audience's opinions in other respects. Some of their opinions are needed to support the fulcrum by which he would move other opinions."[31] While identification is an ever-occurring phenomenon in persuasion, when the rhetor moves beyond merely

identifying with *some* of his auditor's interests to instead identify with *all* of the auditor's interests, a phenomenon altogether unique occurs. I have termed this phenomenon over-identification. With over-identification the rhetor moves to deny any fundamental individual difference between him or herself and the auditor, and instead treats rhetor and auditor as one. Taking identification this one step further threatens the sanctity of the individual and undermines the integrity of the speech-act.

Carroll C. Arnold describes the speech-act as occurring between speaker and listener. For Arnold, the speech-act appeals to the listener to gain his or her agreement.

> In speech the physical person and the existential self are invested—in what is prepared to be spoken, in what is spoken, and in the instant-by-instant being of speaking. Listeners expect it to be so, and if they listen, they ready themselves to close on instigated but private messages, all the while regarding the speaker as an 'other' who seeks a role within their worlds.[32]

Arnold requires that "each party retains its dominion over self"[33] for the speech-act to be legitimate. Accordingly, for communication to be legitimate it must occur between two separate beings who will influence each other throughout the communication process but who will not be subsumed by each other.

Michael Signer's analysis of Long says as much in applying Plato's theory of appetitive alignment to the Kingfish's demagogy. According to Signer, the demagogue frequently seeks "the perfect alignment of an audience's appetites with the manipulate designs of a constantly controlling demagogue."[34] Considering Hitler, Signer quotes from *Mein Kampf*:

> He (the rhetor) will always let himself be borne by the great masses in such a way that instinctively the very words come to his lips that he needs to speak to the hearts of his audience. And if he errs, even in the slightest, he has the living correction before him. As I

> have said, he can read from the facial expression of his audience whether, firstly, they understand what he is saying, whether, secondly, they can follow the speech as a whole, and to what extent, thirdly, he has convinced them of the soundness of what he has said. . . . He himself will utter their objections, which he senses though unspoken, and go on confuting them and exploding them, until at length even the last group of an opposition, by its very bearing and facial expressions, enables him to recognize its capitulation to his arguments.[35]

Hitler's seeking to be "borne by the masses" marks his strategy to identify so strongly with them that their desires are his and his desires are theirs. After analyzing the Fuhrer's speeches, Burke declared "Hitler's blandishments so integrate leader and people, commingling them so inextricably, that the politician does not even present himself as a candidate."[36] Similar to Hitler's use of German nationalism as a device by which to identify with the people, Long and Coughlin looked to the American populist tradition to reflect the general frustrations and resentments of the people and order them in such a way as to integrate their person with that of the speaker's.

The "residual appeal of populism"[37] of which Long and Coughlin took advantage enabled both men to find more than just common ground with their audiences. They united their followers in common resentments. In making every effort to identify themselves as common sufferers in a common suffering, they were able to eventually take control over their audience. The rhetoric of Long and Coughlin provides clear examples of both men's attempts to portray themselves in such a way. Long's attempts to, as Swing put it, make himself seem like "the hill-billy come to power," start from the very beginning of the speech. Indeed, the primary purpose of his introduction seems to build such identification with his audience. Plato warned of "rulers

who behave like subjects and subjects who behave like rulers."[38] Long often behaved like his followers, and his followers frequently thought of themselves as rulers—"every man a king."

Coughlin does the same in "The National Union for Social Justice." Speaking of the Depression as affecting all of "us," he makes it a point to portray himself as suffering alongside his audience. Susan Zickmund observes that this was a common strategy from his very beginning on the radio. In his early sermons, Coughlin routinely identified himself as a sinner: "It is with sincere sorrow, My Dear Jesus, that I look back to that day when my soul was stained by actual sin. Willingly—yes, maliciously I traded You off for some pleasure of the flesh, for some sin of pride of worldliness."[39] Identification was probably much harder for Coughlin than for Long. A priest, Coughlin was faced with the burden of appealing to an audience that, if Catholic, instantly saw him in a light very different than they might a fellow layperson, and if Protestant, would instantly associate him with the dogmas and hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, Coughlin formed a strong identification with his audience. This identification explains why Coughlin could appeal to an audience who seemed to bear "a strong strain of anti-clerical feeling and hatred of the Church hierarchy among them."[40]

Possession

After subsuming the auditor into the identity of the rhetor vis-à-vis what I have termed a process of over-identification, Long and Coughlin then moved to possess their audience. To further clarify what I mean by possession, I want to make it clear that I am not referring to any sort of subliminal or hypnotic control the rhetor exercises over the auditor's thoughts. Rather, by possession I mean the rhetor's ability to control the auditor by making him or her fearful to question the rhetor's position and therefore, almost subconsciously, prompting the auditor to agree energetically with almost everything the rhetor says. Through possession the rhetor

engages the auditor in a cult of affirmation. Long and Coughlin's frequent use of rhetorical questions and "I"-"you"-"we" shift work together to accomplish this purpose, and the psychological effect of these forms on the audience is an irrational endorsement of whatever the rhetor claims. Rather than risk being wrong, considered duped, or worst of all, part of the conspiring and damned "they" the rhetor speaks against, the auditor convinces him or herself that what the rhetor says is true. More than this though, the auditor convinces him or herself that they have reasoned it to be true and that they have exercised their own thought and reason to decide it so. However, subsumed by the rhetor, this sense of control is only an *illusion* of agency—an illusion of empowerment.

Most illuminatingly, Burke writes of Hitler's rhetoric as seeming to emerge from some great democratically chosen voice. Assessing Hitler's rhetoric, Burke writes that the auditor of Hitler might well think "'German democracy' has chosen. And the deployments of politics are, you might say, the chartings of Hitler's private mind translated into the vocabulary of nationalistic events. He says *what he thought* in terms of *what parties did*."[41] For Long and Coughlin, their denunciations of the status quo and the solutions they offered seemed just as democratically chosen. The audience listens as they are told about what they have long resented. As their resentment is expressed in Long and Coughlin's attempts at identification, it builds and is woven into an elaborate explanation of their own failure and that which had become the American economy.

Arthur Schlesinger describes Long's "blistering frontier invective" as securing "the link between his own superior intelligence and the surging envy of the crowds before him. He was their idol—themselves as they would like to be, free and articulate and apparently without fear."[42] Identified with and idolized, Long and Coughlin possessed their audience by virtue of

their own over-identification and by making their audience afraid that if they disagreed they might come to fall out of favor with either man. Once over-identified with their audience, Long and Coughlin both moved to create we-they dichotomies and to engage the audience in a series of rhetorical questions to which the audience simply gives their affirmation. The audience becomes convinced of whatever Long and Coughlin say. If they ever have any doubts, rather than question their leaders and risk falling outside the celebrated group of the common man or the righteous laborer they are more inclined to convince themselves that they are mistaken and that Long and Coughlin know best. Against their better judgment, they conform to whatever Long and Coughlin decree and convince themselves that it is entirely rational to do so. They convince themselves that Long and Coughlin are great men and are to be admired.[43]

Incapacitation of Intellect

Once so possessed, the anti-intellectual rhetor moves to accomplish what is the final and most heinous act of all: the intellectual incapacitation of the auditor. Removing the will of the individual auditor to think, question, and act for him or herself, the rhetor systematically disables the critical capacities of the auditor. Though already subsumed into Long and Coughlin's righteous "we," it is a result the rhetor's ability to incapacitate the auditor that he or she remains *dependent* on the rhetor. The helpless individual needs the assistance of the great and righteous prophet. Isolating the individual according to his or her own antinomian struggle for salvation, Long and Coughlin make it impossible for individuals to act collectively according to their own rational and individual will to do so. Instead, they are dependent on the power of prophesy, the false reassurances of dogma, and faith in a skillful and articulate leader to organize and change the status quo. As Signer notes of Hitler, he "recognized his alignment ideal cannot be reached if the audience is thoughtful and privately governable. . . . Hitler recognized that what might be

called the ‘stupidization’ of the German demos would prepare a fallow field for demagoguery.” Similarly, Long and Coughlin recognized the need to disable the critical capacity of their audience.

Most unlike the populism of the 1890s that preceded it, Long and Coughlin’s Depression Populism undercut the ability of people to organize on their own accord and think their own thoughts. While the populism of the 1890s called for collective action, never did it sacrifice the integrity of the individual. The anti-intellectual style of Long and Coughlin did. Dependent on the leader for everything, Long and Coughlin’s audience did not interact with each other, much less Long or Coughlin. Instead, they listened over their radios to what their leaders had to say. Adopting Long and Coughlin’s ideas as their own, they proceeded to act as a collective mass utterly void of intellectual capacity beyond that of their leaders. Not having the intellectual ability to question the instruction they received, they could act with intelligence to execute with efficiency whatever command they were given. However, they lacked the intellect needed to hold their leaders accountable and ask the penetrating questions that must be asked if democracy is to sustain itself.

In discussing over-identification, possession, and the incapacitation of intellect, it is important to understand that these are gross terms for processes that are deeply interconnected with each other. Over-identification’s submission of the individual auditor to the omnipotent personality of the rhetor naturally incapacitates intellect insomuch as it destroys individual thought, just as the incapacitation of intellect understandably enables the auditor to be possessed by the rhetor. All three of these processes act in tandem with one another to secure the submission of the individual to the authoritarian, to systematically destroy intellect. That said, however, there exists some continuity between them. Only when the rhetor manages to over-

identify with the individual auditor may the rhetor possess the auditor. Likewise, once the individual auditor is possessed by the rhetor into affirming whatever he or she says without question is the intellect truly incapacitated, and the dependence on the rhetor for security and identity confirms the dependency. All three of these processes function together to structure the auditor's experience and define the anti-intellectual style.

The Antinomian Power of Radio & the Privatization of the Public Sphere

The use of radio cannot be overlooked in any consideration of Long and Coughlin's rise to power. Radio changed communication and politics in the United States from its very emergence and further compounded the impact of the anti-intellectual style. The privatization of the public sphere that occurred with the emergence of radio greatly changed American communication dynamics, heightening the effects of an already dangerously tempestuous rhetorical style by removing communication from an interactive public sphere. Radio relegated communication to many private, non-interactive exchanges between often passive recipients and emotive mediated voices.

In addition to all the other counts in which Long and Coughlin are remarkable historical figures, they were also, along with Roosevelt, the first politicians to use radio effectively. As Carlton Beals wrote of Long, apart from Roosevelt, "No other politician—Coughlin was his only competitor—continuously used a national radio hook-up."[44] Radio, in many ways, was a quintessential Populist technology, bringing news, sports, and politics directly to the people. Ironically, and as part of one of those great coincidences in history, the technology of the radio became available to Americans all over the country just before America would be lured in by one of the most significant Populist movements in its history. Michael Signer observes of that the modern demagogue using radio "found himself able to go directly to the source—the individual

citizen—through a personal, intimate medium."[45] The significance of this fact is great. If Long and Coughlin were able to reach their followers directly, then they were able to circumvent any public dimension that might allow for a rational debate of their ideas. In addition, the intensely personal and intimate style of both men, each reaching out to the hearts of their listeners, fit well with the antinomian message of individual salvation both Long and Coughlin were in effect preaching. Long and Coughlin frequently compared themselves to Christ, and it was in their radio-delivered messages that they were to reach their most fervently dedicated disciples.

According to Arthur Schlesinger, Coughlin "probably had the largest steady audience in the world."[46] Long could attract as many listeners as Coughlin when he broadcast, reaching primetime audiences of twenty million and more and receiving as many as 60,000 letters to his Senate office afterward.[47] With one-third of all Americans having radio in their homes, the audience potential of both men was tremendous—and they knew it. For many of the homes to which Long and Coughlin broadcast, "radio was perhaps the only luxury and the greatest comfort."[48] As Signer takes note, radio allowed Long "to communicate directly with the national American demos in a way wholly unanticipated by the Founding Fathers, who designed a system solely for state-bound democratic politicians checked by in-state elites as well as state boundaries."[49] If Hamilton had known of the later advent of radio, then he would likely have suggested an even more intricate system of checks and balances than he did. The threat of mass democracy became increasingly worrisome to the old guard of politicians who feared it. Long and Coughlin sensed this fear and lavished in it.

Radio undermined public exchange. Where people were more likely before to gain an understanding of national issues and events through local newspapers and dialogue, radio replaced many of these opinion outlets, including traditional face-to-face communication. The

contrast between radio and the more public forms of interaction that existed prior to radio is great, and goes to the heart of this thesis. Whereas "face-to-face communication permitted discussions to develop over time,"[50] radio seized listeners in an immediate exchange of information. This exchange essentially involved the one-way transmission of ideas, thoughts, and ideologies to the listener without any sort of interaction on his or her part. Before radio "Present dialogues might build on past dialogues to foster communicative relations that grew over time, changing respects to reflect the changed perspectives of interlocutors."[51] As Long and Coughlin began to increasingly rely on radio for public appeals such was no longer the case. In assessing Long's impact as a modern demagogue, Signer concludes that

> a citizen could simply be sitting in his own house and listening quietly, yet still allowing the appetites in his own character to surge over any thoughtful, deliberative sensibility. And these private reactions could achieve institutional significance. Millions of such private reactions, by citizens listening to Huey Long on the radio in their homes, composed the support for Huey Long's national Share-the-Wealth Society and for his incipient presidential campaign.[52]

Radio as a communication medium allowed Long and Coughlin to bypass spheres of publicity and to instead rely on the cumulative effect of millions upon millions of private reactions across the country.

With the public much more removed from the reception of Long and Coughlin's messages, there was, as Signer acknowledges, little room for deliberation. That both men's messages were experienced so intensely by their audience undercut the possibility of any meaningful deliberation occurring after the radio broadcasts. Instead of discussing Long and Coughlin's speeches over breakfast the next morning, Long and Coughlin's followers held what

they had experienced through their radios closer to their hearts than they might have had the address been read in the newspaper or delivered in a public venue. Their regard of these radio messages could almost be described as an unchallengeable emotional truth—a religious conversion-type experience. Coughlin wrote that "Radio broadcasting, I have found, must not be high hat. It must be human, intensely human. It must be simple."[53] Such instruction could easily be imagined as coming from George Whitefield, Ezra Stiles, or Jonathan Edwards. Further, real dialogic participation in this religious experience is nonexistent; whereas with Whitefield, Stiles, or Edwards, the subject contributed more uniquely to his or her conversion.

Radio, unlike itinerant ministering, reached huge numbers of people at a single moment in time, involving all of them in a low-participation conversion experience. Marshall McLuhan comments on radio's low-participation quality in describing it as hot medium in contrast to cold mediums.

> There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like radio. . . . A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in 'high definition' . . . the state of being well filled with data. A photograph is, visually, 'high definition.' . . . On the other hand, hot media do not leave so much to be filled in or completed by the audience. Hot media are, therefore, low in participation.[54]

Discouraging meaningful participation, radio functioned much more along the lines of a hypodermic model of communication than other mediums might. What Long and Coughlin said was real, and intense, and immediate, and the pathotic appeals on which both men relied were not easily questioned by followers that regarded their messages as if they were religion. Added to the anti-intellectual style's relegation of individual thought and elevation of one singular and ostensibly democratic voice, radio's impact heightened the effect. Radio worked to engage the

auditor in the kind of comfort and illusive agency with a singular over-identified being that only public deliberation in a free and open public sphere can effectively counter.

Freedom in Dialogue: Discourse and Democracy

Extending the effect of the anti-intellectual style across time, the critic can consider its effect on democracy and the public sphere. Doing so requires an understanding of what sort of public sphere is necessary to maintain a properly functioning democracy. It also requires an explanation of how the anti-intellectual style exercised by Long and Coughlin falls short of that requirement. The anti-intellectual genre of speech I have isolated is not only a matter of past concern. Much of contemporary discourse continues to function according to the description of the anti-intellectual style offered in terms of Long and Coughlin's discourse. Assessing the political impact of anti-intellectual speech becomes a particularly important critical endeavor.

John Dewey considers communication as shared experience. According to Dewey, communication is "the establishment of cooperation in an activity in which there are partners, and in which the activity of each is modified and regulated by partnership."[55] As a result, "persuasion should be mutual. For Dewey, democracy is an adventure in mutual persuasion. Democratic ends demand democratic methods." Hence, a healthy democracy is continually in flux, always responding to the evolving attitudes emerging from the constant deliberation of its polity. Consequently, coercive discourse that interferes or prohibits this deliberation is a threat to democracy. The only way democracy can be preserved is in the creation and maintenance of a free and open public sphere in which all citizens may participate in the democratic adventure Dewey describes.

Democracies emerge from individuals coming together in communion to govern themselves according to a popular, dynamic, and deliberative will that all participate in determining. The essential criterion of democracy is thus the participation of the individual in concert with others. Communities are the basic units of democracy, and "a community thus presents an order of energies transmuted into one of meanings which are appreciated and mutually referred by each to every other on the part of those engaged in combined action."[56] A democracy will likely consist of multiple communities. A functioning democracy as large as the United States will to have many communities and many publics. In such a case, democracy as a political system would involve the integration of these publics. In a healthy public sphere, never would a democratic public remain static, and never would multiple communities and publics "be subsumed into larger and larger publics to create one big public."[57] Communities and publics should always be in constant interaction with one another, just as communities of individuals should be. According to Dewey, never should only one vision or idea be embraced by an individual or a smaller community and held to represent the values of the larger community to the exclusion of other visions and ideas.[58] Instead, democracy rests on a free and open communication between multiple individuals and groups in which multiple visions and ideas are discussed and experienced. In following these democratic means when reaching popular consensus, democracy is protected as a joint project involving both individual and community.

The anti-intellectual style endangers this kind of free and open public sphere in which no singular vision or idea can come to exclude other visions or ideas. The anti-intellectual style, as exemplified in the cases of Long and Coughlin, produces a singular and simplified vision that is the rhetor's alone. Delivered over radio, Long and Coughlin's addresses portray a vision of America that the individual auditor cannot adequately refute or contribute to in a free and open

public sphere. The vision is Long and Coughlin's alone and their audiences are there only to follow.

Further, in subsuming the auditor in the identity of the rhetor and denying the fundamental separateness between speaker and listener, the anti-intellectual style effectively inhibits deliberative democracy. As Cass Sunstein explains, deliberative democracy hopes to "create institutions to ensure that people will be exposed to many topics and ideas, including ideas that they reject, and topics in which they have, as yet, expressed little interest."[59] Promoting only a singular vision of social problems and reducing the individual's role to mere spectatorship, the anti-intellectual style is anathema to democracy. Subsumed into the authoritarian identity of the rhetor, the individual auditor cannot contribute to the democratic process. Their intellect incapacitated, the auditor is unable to reflect on social problems and issues in any meaningful way and is fearful to bring about alternative ideas and viewpoints that might risk his or her alienation. Communication is thus no longer shared experience between community members, but rather passive acceptance of whatever the authoritarian wills. The antithesis to democracy, authoritarianism is inherently anti-intellectual insofar as it targets the intellect and intellectual upon which democracy rests. If democracy "constitutes a continuous process" that involves the individuals exercising their given intellectual capacities in concert with one another, then it "signals an orientation toward action in various domains of human activity rather than a singularly delineated end."[60]

The anti-intellectual speech of Long and Coughlin incapacitated the intellect and subsumed the individual in the identity of the rhetor. Thus, neither man afforded any opportunity for democracy to function properly. There was no room for dissent, no ability to strike a thought outside the rhetor's control, no power to question and move ideas forward by

means of the kind of creative citizen engagement that is essential for any democracy to succeed. Faith was in will and power—not in the reason and intellect of thinking men and women in dialogue with one another.

NOTES

[1] John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1954), p. 209.

[2] Ralph Waldo Emerson, quoted in Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (Vintage: New York. 1963), p. viii.

[3] Alan Brinkley, *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), p. 6.

[4] Ibid. See the *New York Times*, March 10, 1935.

[5] Michael Signer, "The Demagogue: Ancient, Modern, and Postmodern" (Unpublished dissertation, University of California at Berkeley, 2001), p. 97; Brinkley, Ibid.

[6] Raymond Gram Swing, "The Build-up of Long and Coughlin," *Nation* 140 (March 20, 1935), p. 325.

[7] T. Harry Williams, *Huey Long* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), p. 810. Long convinced NBC to give him an extra fifteen minutes of talk time in addition to their initial offer of thirty minutes. The station had originally allotted the Kingfish only thirty minutes to roughly equal the time Johnson had had. Knowing that NBC was seeking ratings in making the offer to begin with, Long insisted that he be given more time.

[8] Long, quoted in Williams, 810.

[9] The *American Progress* was being ordered in lots of a thousand by news dealers as far away as Los Angeles. See Brinkley, p. 205.

[10] Brinkley, pp. 203-6.

[11] Frank Joesten, quoted in Brinkley, p. 204-5.

[12] William Ivy Hair, *The Kingfish and His Realm: The Life and Times of Huey P. Long* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), p. 307. Roosevelt had been conducting investigations into the election of John Overton to the Senate and had commissioned the Internal Revenue Service to examine corruption in the state. Such investigations were considered as possible pretexts for military occupation of the state, though the Administration was nervous that such a move might bring back memories of Reconstruction.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Brinkley, p. 79, p. 247.

[15] Ibid., p. 243.

[16] Ibid., pp. 243-246.

[17] Ronald H. Carpenter, *Father Charles E. Coughlin: Surrogate Spokesman for the Disaffected* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998), 56-7.

[18] Brinkley, p. 134.

[19] Coughlin, quoted in Donald Warren, *Radio Priest: Charles Coughlin, the Father of Hate Radio* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), p. 63.

[20] Brinkley, p. 136.

[21] Coughlin, quoted in Warren, p. 64.

[22] Ibid., p. 66.

[23] Warren, p. 66.

[24] Brinkley, p. 190.

[25] Ibid., pp. 190-91.

[26] In April 1936, threatened by disparate local chapters engaging in all sorts of activities Coughlin could not micromanage, Coughlin declared in the National Union's publication *Social Justice* that "reports are coming to our central office to the effect that local political machines, are beginning to infiltrate the National Union. . . . Local unity meetings are called for the purpose of studying the principles of social justice. As worthy of any other cause may be, no other subject should be introduced at these gatherings" (*Social Justice* (April 1935), quoted in Brinkley, p. 191).

[27] "Father Coughlin Walks Again," *Nation* 143 (August 22, 1936), pp. 201-2.

[28] Coughlin's anti-Semitism, his explicit sympathies with Nazism, and his admiration of Mussolini's Italy were all later developments in his career that followed his alienation from national politics. Following 1936, Coughlin's audience greatly diminished. For an accounting of some of Coughlin's most bigoted speeches, see his collection of radio sermons he gave throughout 1938 in *Sixteen Radio Lectures: 1938 Series* (Detroit, MI: Condon Printing Company, 1938), pp. 89-99.

[29] Edwin Black, "The Second Persona" from *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, Second Edition, Carl R. Burgchardt (State College, PA: Strata, 2000), p. 193

[30] Burke's discussion of identification links to his theory of consubstantiality and his notion of what is meant by "substance." For further discussion of Burke's philosophical insights, see *A Rhetoric of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 20-23. See also *A Grammar of Motives* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 51-58.

[31] Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (1969), p. 58.

[32] Carroll C. Arnold, quoted in Thomas W. Benson, "Rhetoric as a Way of Being," *American Rhetoric: Context and Criticism* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), p. 296.

[33] Ibid., pp. 295-6.

[34] Signer, p. 113.

[35] Adolph Hitler, quoted in Signer, p. 113.

[36] Burke, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle," *Readings in Rhetorical Criticism*, Second Edition, ed. Carl R. Burgchardt (State College, PA: Strata, 2000), p. 217

[37] Brinkley, p. 165.

[38] Plato, *The Republic*, trans. G.M.A. Grube, rev. C.D.C. Reeve (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1992), p. 233.

[39] Susan Zickmund, "The Shepherd of the Discontented: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Discourse of Father Charles E. Coughlin" (Unpublished dissertation, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1993), p. 38.

[40] David H. Bennett, *Demagogues in the Depression: American Radicals and the Union Party, 1932-1936* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1969), p. 58.

[41] Burke, "The Rhetoric of Hitler's Battle," p. 217.

[42] Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., quoted in Robert Stephen Iltis, "Beyond Devil Tokens: The Style of Huey P. Long" (Unpublished dissertation, University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1989), p. 35.

[43] Erich Fromm discusses this tendency in greater depth in considering the neurotic's response to leadership they do not agree with, and maybe even hate. See Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1941), p. 163-4.

[44] Carlton Beals, quoted in Ernest Gordon Bormann, "A Rhetorical Analysis of the National Radio Broadcasts of Huey P. Long," (Unpublished Dissertation: State University of Iowa, 1953), p. 8.

[45] Signer, p. 119.

[46] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Politics of Upheaval* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1960), p. 20.

[47] Brinkley, p. 169.

[48] Bennett, p. 17.

[49] Signer, p. 122.

[50] John Dewey, quoted in Robert Asen, "The Multiple Mr. Dewey: Multiple Publics and Permeable Borders in John Dewey's Theory of the Public Sphere," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 39 (Winter 2003), p. 184.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Signer, p. 125.

[53] Coughlin, quoted in Brinkley, p. 97.

[54] Marshall McLuhan, quoted in Carpenter, p. 127.

[55] John Dewey, quoted in Don M. Burks, "John Dewey and Rhetorical Theory," *Western Speech* 32 (1968), p. 122.

[56] Robert Asen, The Multiple Mr. Dewey: Multiple Publics and Permeable Borders in John Dewey's Theory of the Public Sphere," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 39 (Winter 2003), p. 181. Asen, quoting Dewey declares that "In its ideal sense, democracy 'is the idea of community life itself.'"

[57] Ibid., p. 183.

[58]Burks, pp. 125-126.

[59] Cass R. Sunstein, *Designing Democracy: What Constitutions Do* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 7. The past decade has brought to the forefront a number of significant studies regarding the role of deliberation in democracy. Many of these studies have established deliberation as a necessary component to democracy. See James Fishkin, *Democracy and Deliberation: New Directions for Democratic Reform* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991) and Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1996).

[60] Asen, "A Discourse Theory of Citizenship" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 2 (May 2004), p. 198.

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